



**RIGHT WING BIGOTS TAKE OVER THE WHITE HOUSE >>Page 17**

Meet Trump's bad dream team



**SELF-DEFENCE IS NO OFFENCE >>Pages 10&11**

**VICTORY FOR ROTHERHAM 12**

# Socialist Worker

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**SHOW YOUR PASSPORT BEFORE YOU USE THE NHS**

**RACIST RULES WILL KILL**



HEALTH SECRETARY Jeremy Hunt

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

**SOME PATIENTS are being forced to show their passports before receiving NHS treatment—and the attack could spread to other areas.**

Chris Wormald, the Department of Health's top civil servant, said, "Are we looking at whether trusts should proactively ask people to prove their identity?"

"Yes we are looking at that."

He praised health bosses at Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Trust who are already implementing the racist rules. Patients are asked to provide two forms of ID when seeking non-emergency care.

Jo Rust is the Unison union regional organiser for health in Peterborough. She told Socialist Worker, "I'm disgusted that passport checks are being carried out in our area. Peterborough is a diverse area

and has a large migrant population.

"The Tories aren't funding the NHS. They want to divert attention towards migrants and divide our communities."

The attack is going on under Tory health secretary Jeremy Hunt. Wormald suggested that the Tories could

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**THESE PLANS ARE AN ATTACK ON US ALL**

## TEACHING ASSISTANTS

**School workers fight a pay cut—and split Labour**

AROUND 130 schools in County Durham were hit by a teaching assistants' strike last week. They planned to walk out again this week.

Labour councillors are slashing their pay by a quarter. But strikers know that parents are on their side—and so are some local Labour groups.

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## SOUTH KOREA



**Workers march to bring down the president**

PROTESTERS took to the streets of major cities last Saturday to demand the resignation of president Park Geun-hye.

In the capital Seoul, 600,000 people protested.

But Park said that she would neither step down nor accept a prosecutor's investigation.

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## AUSTERITY

**Activists take to the streets to defend the NHS**

LABOUR LEADER Jeremy Corbyn called for "trade unionists and other activists" to join a day of campaigning for the NHS this Saturday.

Further details of the Tories' assault on the NHS emerged last week. Hundreds of services could be closed.

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## THE THINGS THEY SAY

### 'Britain is leaving the EU—OK, I accept that'

Lib Dem Sarah Olney before she became the candidate in the Richmond by-election campaigning to reverse the Brexit vote

### 'Boris's jokes are no longer funny'

A Downing Street source on Boris Johnson after he apparently turned up for a meeting with the wrong notes

### 'It is a total lie to suggest that the Foreign Secretary did not attend with the correct papers'

Johnson's spokesman after he apparently turned up for a meeting with the wrong notes

### 'Whoever is spreading this nonsense should focus more on doing their job'

The spokesman continues

### 'You'll sell less prosecco'

Johnson's alleged threat to an Italian minister if Britain doesn't get a good trade deal

### 'I never heard him say anything I thought offensive'

Nigel Farage gives his vote of confidence to Steve Bannon, Donald Trump's racist adviser



# Snooper's charter passed to give the spooks more power

PARLIAMENT PASSED the Investigatory Powers Bill last week.

It legalises a whole range of tools for snooping and hacking by the security services unmatched by any other country in western Europe or even the US.

The security agencies and police began the year rehearsing arguments for the debate. In the end, the government did not have to make a single substantial concession.

Whistleblower Edward Snowden noted, "The UK has just legalised the most extreme surveillance in the history of western democracy. It goes further than many autocracies".

What does the new act permit?

It includes powers to force companies to make their phones less secure so that

they can be listened in on by spies, and others. It will allow the government to ask companies such as Apple and Google to help them break or hack into phones.

It will require internet service providers to keep detailed information on their customers' web browsing for the last year.

The government was essentially making legal a series of spying practices that it has been carrying out for years.

It then, since there was little opposition, escalated the bill's measures. Happily, MPs may be exempt from some of the spying.

Labour peer Shami

Chakrabarti made her maiden speech in the House of Lords on Thursday.

Strangely, the shadow attorney-general hadn't made her debut the previous day, when the Lords had debated the expansion of surveillance powers.

Surely, as the director for 13 years of a civil liberties campaigning group, she might have had some insights.

Apparently not.

Labour supported the snooper's charter. And ermine is a great comfort for loss of conscience.

LABOUR peers last week also demanded the introduction of compulsory ID cards.

The Tories turned them down because they said it would be too expensive.

SHAMI CHAKRABARTI

UKIP COULD be forced to repay nearly £150,000 after allegations that the money was misspent.

The Alliance for Direct Democracy in Europe, which Ukip is part of, has been accused of using European Union money for electioneering in Britain.

"This is pure victimisation," said Ukip leader Nigel Farage. "I am the most investigated MEP in history."



Ukip supporter

FORMER TORY MP David Ruffley, who was forced to quit parliament in disgrace, has failed to pay back wrongly claimed expenses almost a year and a half after he stopped being an MP.

Ruffley double claimed a £144 house removals bill. The Commons has now given up trying to get the cash back.

## Making up the facts about migration...

THE TIMES led last week with the headline, "95% of new workers are foreigners"—but the newspaper is misleading its readers.

So, the number of people in work increased by 454,000 between July and September last year and the same period this year.

Workers born overseas was up just over 430,000.

It sounds right but it isn't.

Every quarter, when employment figures come out, such headlines are common across the press.

The Sun did the same

in May. The Daily Mail, Express, Telegraph and the Spectator all do it.

Newspapers divide the rise in foreign-born workers by the rise in employment.

But it is wrong. Official

employment figures do not show how many new jobs went to foreign-born workers. No such figures exist.

The economy is growing so there are both more jobs and more people.

Non UK nationals make up about ten percent of the workforce—if it matters.



## ...and making up facts about Corbyn

LABOUR leader Jeremy Corbyn was accused last week to of having "broken into a jig" en route to the Remembrance Day commemoration at the Cenotaph.

A carefully cropped photo from Steve Back's politicalpics account was to blame. Back is a regular in the Downing Street press pen. Apparently Steve (right) doesn't like his photo in the press.

Last year, after

the Battle of Britain 75th anniversary commemoration at St Paul's Cathedral, politicalpics claimed, "First time I've met Corbyn at St Paul's for 75th battle for Britain, don't like the fact he took 2 free lunch bags for veterans Nasty ... Jeremy Corbyn leaving St Pauls

Battle of Britain ceremony takes 2 free lunch bags which were offered to veterans".

This was also not true.



Steve Back dancing

## Queen gets the builders in—you're paying

THERESA MAY is to hand over £369 million to the Royal family so the leeches can refurbish their 775-room Buckingham Palace home.

The work on the Palace includes replacing flooring, electric wiring, toilets and pipe work. It will begin next April and take ten years to complete.

That means the queen will receive £76 million in April, up from £43 million this year.

Her funding for the next ten years is projected to almost double on the previous decade.

Apart from her personal wealth, the queen receives an annual income from the Duchy of Lancaster's profits which was £17.8 million this year.

The Royal Collection contains many artefacts deemed priceless but many estimate its value as above £10 billion.

Needs work?

## Files reveal Thatcher plot over Orgreave

MARGARET Thatcher's government plotted to back up the cops in the wake of the 1985 Battle of Orgreave.

Police attacked striking miners then framed many for riot.

Home Office files show that Thatcher was told that serious flaws in police evidence "may lead to an investigation" the day after the first trials collapsed.

One note between senior Home Office officials discussed a draft response for Thatcher to use in parliament.

"I have made it more supportive of the police, on the lines we discussed," it said. It advised Thatcher to say, "I see no ground for a public inquiry."

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# Teaching assistants fight pay cut—and split Labour

by RAYMIE KIERNAN

**A REVOLT by County Durham teaching assistants (TAs) is dividing the Labour Party. The TAs were set to walk out for their second 48-hour strike on Wednesday.**

When 57 Labour councillors voted through 23 percent pay cuts two months ago they must have felt confident there would be no kickback. But the dispute between council leaders and TAs reveals the tensions within Labour since Jeremy Corbyn was elected leader.

“At the heart of this dispute are people who represent Corbyn’s Labour values and a Labour-controlled council that thinks it is untouchable,” TA Helen told Socialist Worker.

“For too long councillors have got away with doing exactly what they please and they thought this was a done deal with us. They didn’t expect the fight.”

Workers’ first strike last week saw around 130 schools closed or severely disrupted. The Unison and ATL union members mounted over 80 picket lines across the county.

Parents have made it clear they are on the TAs’ side. And discontent is rumbling in Labour.

Darlington South Central Labour Party has voted unanimously to back the TAs, while other Labour groups have invited TAs to speak at their meetings.

## Block

Desperate councillors are now trying to block debate on the TAs’ dispute at party meetings.

Lisa, a member of the TAs’ rank and file committee, has spoken at local Labour meetings. She said there was “disbelief” and “shame” at what councillors are doing in their name.

Just 57 out of a total of 126 councillors in Durham voted through the attack. Some 40 Labour councillors



DURHAM TEACHING assistants are fighting back

PICTURE: DURHAM TEACHING ASSISTANTS VALUE US CAMPAIGN

## BACK STORY

**Labour-run Durham council wants to sack 2,700 teaching assistants**

- It plans to sack them on 31 December and rehire them the next day on worse contracts
- The attack would slash the pay of some workers, most of whom are low paid women, by 23 percent
- Workers held a 48-hour strike two weeks ago—closing or severely disrupting 130 schools
- The Unison and ATL union members were set to hold a second 48-hour strike this week

didn’t vote. Helen said, “Those who didn’t turn up to vote clearly wanted to distance themselves from it.” She said that some councillors were just “doing as they are told”.

It’s time these councillors spoke out. Jeremy Corbyn rightly backed the TAs at this year’s Durham Miners’ Gala. He publicly told councillors, “Get it sorted.”

“That was a turning point for us,” TA Megan told Socialist Worker. “We’d love to see him come back up and join us on a strike day to help us get this sorted once and for all.”

The councillors imposing Tory austerity are oblivious to the damage they are doing to Labour. The May

2017 council elections could deliver a stinging rebuke.

Over £270 million of usable reserves exist at County Hall. Meanwhile council chiefs are considering outsourcing services and slashing 2,000 posts—while pretending that the TAs’ pay cut isn’t about austerity.

Teaching assistants have the power to push back the councillors taking an axe to their living standards. Jeremy Corbyn needs to show which side he’s on.

To send messages of solidarity, donate to the rank and file fighting fund and request a speaker to address your union branch meeting email [spartacusannie@gmail.com](mailto:spartacusannie@gmail.com)



>>>from page one  
specifically just target areas with migrant populations or “apply it to the whole country”.

All “ordinary residents”—people who have an indefinite leave to remain in Britain—have a right to free healthcare.

That includes EU citizens living in Britain.

Migrants from outside the EU have no right to free healthcare and since April they have had to pay a “migrant surcharge”.

This is an attack on the principle of free treatment—and a bridgehead to restricting access for everyone.

The Tories complain about “health tourists”. Yet the official annual estimate for “health tourists” is between 5,000 and 20,000 people.

## Million

The NHS treats a million people every 36 hours.

The passport plan is part of the Tories’ racist assault on migrants.

Some 55,000 of the NHS’s 1.2 million workforce are from other EU countries. The proportion is higher for workers from outside the EU.

Whenever people are pushed away from treatment it makes public health worse for all.

And it will put patients’ lives at risk.

Socialist Worker believes that everyone has a right to free health care—wherever they are from.

The unions must resist this attack and support workers who refuse to implement it.

## SOCIALIST WORKER APPEAL TO RAISE £125,000

The appeal has now reached £95,134 so we are well on track to reach our target of £125,000. Please help us get there by making a donation, organising a fundraising event, or doing a collection among your readers.

Contact us or your local branch with any fundraising ideas. Let’s keep it an affordable price in print – and free online.

**To donate go to [www.socialistworker.co.uk/appeal](http://www.socialistworker.co.uk/appeal)**

Call 020 7640 5620 or send a cheque, payable to ‘SW Appeal’ to PO Box 71327, London SE11 9BW

### I SUPPORT THE APPEAL BECAUSE...

Socialist Worker has been a staunch ally all through our long campaign to save Lambeth’s libraries from needless destruction.

It has kept the real issues in the public eye, helped us build up the

huge support we have – and kept up our morale, too! It’s a lively paper, and it focuses on the things that matter.

**Laura Swaffield**  
Lambeth Defend the Ten Library campaign



## IN THIS WEEK

# 1990

## Hated Margaret Thatcher resigns

MARGARET Thatcher announced her resignation as prime minister on 22 November 1990.

The Poll Tax riot in London in March that year, where 200,000 people marched, was the first nail in her coffin.





# A thousand more drown so far this year than in all of 2015

by DAVESEWELL

**A SERIES of mass drownings has brought the number of deaths in the Mediterranean this year to 4,700—20 percent more than the total for 2015.**

The dead were largely migrants from Sub-Saharan African countries, setting out from Libya in inflatable dinghies that capsized or sank.

A European Union (EU) and Nato clampdown on traffickers piloting wooden fishing boats has seen many switch to sending refugees out alone on smaller, cheaper and simpler boats.

This was behind the worst incidents of last week. The clampdown has also driven more refugees to sail from Egypt—an even longer route.

More than 340 people died in just three days last week, including around 100 whose dinghy sank after smugglers towed it out to sea and abandoned them on Thursday morning.

Survivor Abdoullae Diallo, an 18 year old from Senegal, said, “At that moment I thought we were going to die. I knew we were not close to Italy and without an engine we could not get far.”

The 27 survivors were rescued by Britain’s HMS Enterprise, then transferred to a ship run by charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF). Those who survive the crossing are taken to Italy.

Charity worker Mathilde Auvillain said, “One young boy has been weeping, asking for his mother. Another has written a list of names of the people travelling with him and re-reads it over and over. He wants to know if his friends are on the boat or in the sea.”

The British navy’s presence is part of a process making the journey into Europe ever more difficult and deadly.

Tens of thousands of refugees are stuck in Greece, including on islands such as Chios, where fascists burned and smashed part of a refugee camp last week.

**A n d Theresa May is responsible for refugee deaths**

once refugees get to Britain the whole system is focused on sending them back.

The Home Office regularly disregards medical evidence of torture when rejecting asylum seekers, charity Freedom From Torture has found.

## Torture

It found 50 cases over a two-year period of “egregious mishandling” of doctors’ reports saying injuries were likely to be the result of torture.

Three quarters of them had asylum granted on appeal, including an opposition activist who was raped and burned by security services in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

“It’s really, deeply hurtful when you’ve been through torture and abuse and they seem not to understand and not to even believe your story,” she said.

Politicians who shudder hypocritically at the racism of Donald Trump or Nigel Farage are enforcing these cruel policies.

This drives refugees to take ever deadlier risks, and legitimises racists who complain when immigration continues anyway.

Breaking it down must be a central demand of the coming months’ Stand Up To Racism campaigning (see right), leading to the national demonstrations on Saturday 18 March.

Join the No to Farage—Unite Against Racism demonstration on 5 December, 12 noon, Parliament Square. Go to [bit.ly/2fxDdZb](http://bit.ly/2fxDdZb)

**REFUGEES FIGHT for their lives in the Mediterranean**

## French state lies spark fury and protests among Calais refugees

**THE FORMER site of the Calais “jungle” is now a barren expanse of mud—but most of the refugees who lived there are still being shut out.**

**Ibrahim and Baker, two Sudanese refugees arrested during the jungle demolition, faced imminent deportation back to war-torn regions this week.**

**Thousands more are scattered in small groups around towns and villages across France.**

**To get them to leave the jungle, the authorities told them they could apply for asylum in France. But refugees in Rennes began a hunger strike last week after being told they could be sent back to Italy under the Dublin convention.**

**“They promised us that the Dublin procedure was being stopped, and we believed them,” they said in a statement.**

**“Now we find out that it was all untrue.”**

**They have been pushed to fill in their asylum requests without a translator present. Supporters say this will lead to unclear**

**they had felt better off in the squalid, dangerous jungle. A quarter hadn’t been given clean clothes.**

**One boy said the reception centre he shares with adult refugees “looks like a prison”.**

**“I am not happy staying in this accommodation,” another added. “Please, please take us out of here to the UK.”**

## Horrible

**Some had been forced to do unpaid labour. “It is horrible,” said one boy who had been made to pick apples. “We just want to be with our family in the UK.”**

**The Home Office claims it is “absolutely committed to bringing all eligible children to the UK as soon as possible”.**

**But it issued guidelines last week saying that unaccompanied 12-15 year olds—eligible under the Dubs amendment—would only be accepted if they were Syrian or Sudanese.**

**Fewer than a sixth of the interviewed children had any contact from the Home Office.**

**People have been brutally detained**

**requests that are easier for the state to reject.**

**A protest was also reported inside the reception centre at Laon in northern France last Sunday.**

**Far right protesters tried to storm the reception centre in the western village of Arzon last week and kicked down its gate before being arrested.**

**More than a third of the minors from Calais interviewed by charity Safe Passage UK said**

## Meetings to organise the fightback against racism

**STAND UP To Racism (SUTR) groups around Britain were set to join campaigning around Islamophobia Awareness Month alongside Muslim Engagement and Development (Mend) this week.**

**Six SUTR rallies brought together up to 400 people last week.**

**At one in Cardiff, local Mend chair Sahar Al Afaifi spoke passionately about the racism she had experienced wearing a veil—and the solidarity she had received from co-workers.**

**She said, “Every time I feel like things are hopeless, I remember the actions of my colleagues and it gives me the strength to be proud of who I am and my community.”**

**More than 50 people joined the meeting. There were also over 60 in Glasgow—where the STUC is set to hold its annual anti-racism march this Saturday.**

**More than 70 came in Edinburgh. Its US Consulate will see one of several protests taking place in Britain on Friday 20 January when racist bigot Donald Trump is inaugurated**



**Tasneem Ali speaking at the Edinburgh SUTR meeting**

**as US president.**

**Unison union assistant general secretary Roger McKenzie told an audience of more than 70 people in Oxford on Thursday, “People have said things I haven’t heard since the 1970s when the National Front was on the rise.**

**“It’s great to be in a packed meeting but now is the time to act.”**

**At a 30-strong meeting in Harlow, Essex, campaigners announced a day of leafleting to bust myths about refugees and immigration—part of a nationwide SUTR Winter Appeal.**

**Sixth form students Ashleigh and Leon told Socialist Worker they wanted to argue with classmates who bought into anti-refugee myths.**

**Mira, a Polish**

**woman who has lived in Harlow for 11 years, blamed Tory and Ukup politicians stirring up racism during the European Union referendum campaign for racist abuse she has received.**

**Around 70 people came to the meeting in Waltham Forest, east London on Saturday.**

**SUTR joint convenor Weyman Bennett said, “When the English Defence League turned up at the London protest against Trump I told them to leave. I could do that because there were hundreds of us and two of them.”**

**To beat the racists we must build a mass movement.**

**Join the STUC No Racism protest on 26 November. Assemble at Glasgow Green at 10.30am Go to [bit.ly/2fKJnYH](http://bit.ly/2fKJnYH)**

## Protest against racist raid

**CAMPAIGNERS in Manchester are fighting to stop the deportation of**

**Zambian-born former nurse Dianne Ngoza.**

**Dianne was detained in a reporting centre in Salford last week after her application to remain in the country was rejected.**

**She has lived in Britain for 14 years.**

**Around 30 people protested outside, including Dianne’s daughter, blocking a**



**Dianne Ngoza**

**van that was set to take her to a detention centre.**

**They were out campaigning in**

**central Manchester on Monday. Dianne was then taken to the notorious Yarl’s Wood detention centre in Bedfordshire.**

**The Home Office bans asylum seekers from working legally, which has made Dianne destitute for years.**

**Join the demonstration outside Yarl’s Wood detention centre on 3 December at 3pm. Organised by Movement for Justice. Go to [bit.ly/2ec2dFe](http://bit.ly/2ec2dFe)**

**Socialist Worker**  
**WHAT WE THINK**

## TORIES’ FEARS SHOULD ENCOURAGE US TO FIGHT

**I**N TURBULENT times, all the Tories are sure of is that they will keep attacking us.

**Addressing the bosses’ CBI on Monday, Theresa May refused to give a detailed Brexit plan.**

**She spoke in front of a logo for Deloitte, the firm Downing Street criticised for saying Brexit was “beyond the capacity and capability” of the government.**

**“When I am able to be clear about Brexit I will be clear,” she said. “I can be clear that I will not be marching the country off the side of a cliff.”**

**May did clarify that when she’d previously said workers must be represented on companies’ boards she hadn’t really meant it.**

**She promised to put “Britain at the cutting edge of science and tech” by being less behind on research funding. And she boasted of “the lowest corporate tax rate in the G20”—even though US president-elect Donald Trump already plans an even bigger tax giveaway to the bosses.**

**Chancellor Phillip Hammond was yet to make his Autumn Statement as Socialist Worker went to press. He was expected to change the rules committing**

**the government to made up deficit targets.**

**And no wonder—his tenure so far has been spent showering the bosses with cash.**

**Mumbling about infrastructure won’t help the people May calls Jams—“Just About Managing”—an insulting buzzword for those pushed to the edge by continuing austerity.**

**Cuts to services, benefits, jobs and pay keep rolling through. But the government is far from unbeatable. It abandoned its mandatory “pay to stay” tax on council tenants this week.**

**David Cameron’s Housing and Planning Act committed councils to charge high rents to anyone**

**earning more than the very poorest. This will now be left at councils’ discretion.**

**This partial victory reflects widespread anger at the Act. It also reflects a fear at the top—even among some Tory council bosses—of causing chaos if they make a wrong move.**

**NHS chiefs are similarly fearful of botching the health cuts (see page 7).**

**Split by the shape of Brexit, and fearful of unpopularity, the Tories are uncertain about the right moves to make.**

**More than eight years after the financial crash, there is no sign of sustained economic recovery. Each new shock caused by the resulting political instability sets off fears of a new crisis.**

**What’s missing is real resistance from our side.**

**Whether on immigration or spending, Labour can’t seem to decide when to oppose the government and when to go halfway towards it.**

**Unions aren’t mobilising workers with strikes—or even mass marches. If anyone is going to go over the cliff, we must raise our game to make sure it’s May and the bosses.**

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## ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



## Clarity, not slippage, needed on migration

**THE RELATIVELY firm stand Jeremy Corbyn has taken on migration is a tonic in a dark time. But this principled stand is under heavy attack from within the Labour Party.**

At Labour's National Policy Forum in Loughborough last week, Corbyn denounced the "fake anti-elitism" of Donald Trump and Nigel Farage, two "rich white men". He also pledged Labour to taking "a different path" on immigration.

"There can be no accommodation, now and never, with hate," he said, refusing to "make false promises on immigration targets as the Tories have done".

It's not news that right wing Labour MPs demand that the party drop its support for free movement for European Union (EU) workers. Though it's a particularly contemptible U-turn from those who campaigned to remain in the EU.

But, according to the New Statesman magazine last week, similar moves are taking place in Corbyn's team itself.

The plan is, apparently, "to go into the election with a sharper offer on border control. One shadow minister describes it like this 'radical on the economy, where the public are on immigration'.

"Just as Ed Miliband turned to Chuka Umunna and Sadiq Khan to do the heavy lifting as far as announcements on immigration were concerned, Clive Lewis, who as well as being from an ethnic minority is popular among activists, has been deployed for many of the more controversial announcements—telling the Guardian that free movement of people has not worked for 'millions' of Brits, and announcing today that only people who are members of a trade union should be able to come to work here.

"He reiterated that on Sky..., say[ing] that 'if immigration has had a net benefit, the benefits have not been share[d] fairly, and the way to tackle that is to compel companies that bring people in from abroad to only bring in those who are trade union members, adding 'I think that that will in turn mean that companies will want to begin to take people more often from this country.'"

This approach is wrong on so many levels.

### Concedes

It concedes the argument of Farage and the Tory right, who want to put their stamp on Brexit by claiming that the vote to leave was all about immigration. In fact, polling reveals more complex and divided attitudes.

For example, a ComRes survey published at the end of September showed 61 percent support preserving freedom of movement in some form. That compares to just 39 percent who want the so-called "Australian" points-based system advocated by Ukip.

Lewis also largely accepts that immigration has a negative economic impact, even though there is very little evidence.

Corbyn himself goes some way in this direction, saying for example in Loughborough, "we will take decisive action to end the undercutting of workers' pay and conditions, reinstate the migrant impact fund to support public services and back fair rules on migration".

This way of putting it is just about OK. It places responsibility on the government for not supporting communities where migration has taken place and on British employers and their gangmasters for super-exploiting migrant labour.

But this is dangerous territory ideologically.

So much of what's said about the supposed economic damage caused by migration is driven by xenophobic fantasy that has nothing to do with any genuine evidence.

Lewis's suggestion to allow in only trade unionists is dreadful—and all the more so since it is intended to have a vaguely right-on feel.

How would it work? Is the Border Agency going to contact trade unions around Europe to check the membership of potential migrants?

Moreover, it lets the British unions—which should be straining to organise migrant workers—off the hook.

One of the few genuine boons offered by European integration has been the freedom for workers to move, live, and work across the continent.

This is now under threat—from the Brexiteers and Labour back-sliders, and throughout Europe from the racist right. It's the duty of everyone who cares about the future of the labour movement to fight to defend it.

# Millions trapped in poverty as class still divides Britain

Right wing MPs fear falling social mobility could undermine support for the free market system, writes **Sadie Robinson**

**FREE MARKET policies have condemned most people in Britain to worse lives than their parents had, a damning new report has concluded.**

The Social Mobility Commission's State of the Nation 2016 report found "major market failures".

The commission was established by the government, but its recommendations for change go against every major Tory policy.

The report contains some sobering statistics. More than half the adults in Wales, the North East of England, Yorkshire and the Humber and the West Midlands have less than £100 in savings.

### University

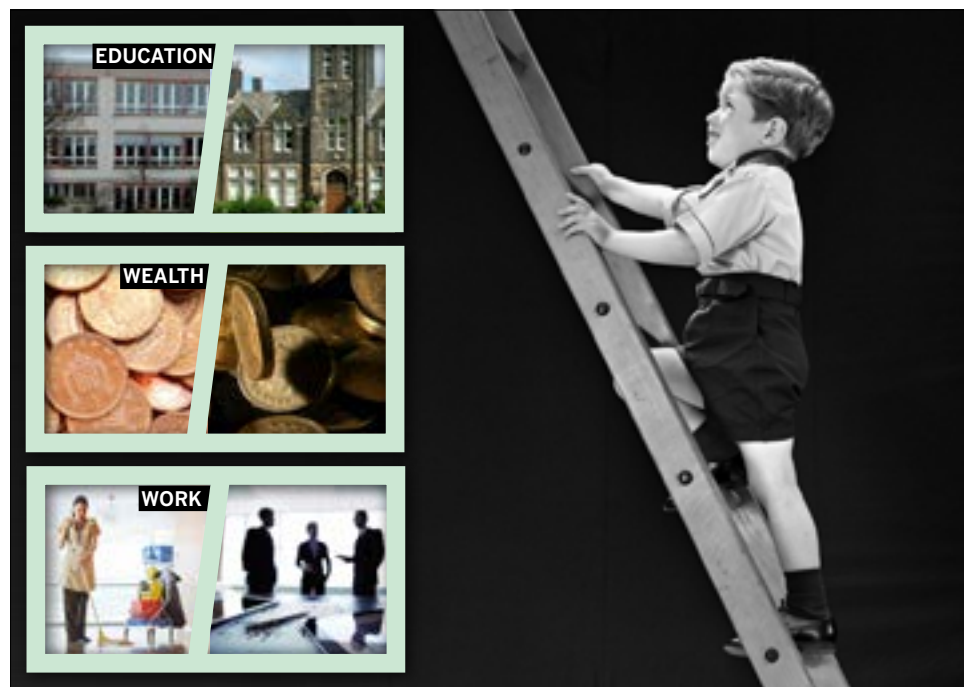
Not one child eligible for free school meals in the North East of England leaving school in 2010 went to Oxford or Cambridge university.

Just one went from Yorkshire and the Humber.

The expectation that "each generation would be better off than the preceding one is no longer being met".

People born in the 1980s had, by their early 30s, an average net household wealth of £27,000 per adult—barely half the £53,000 of those born in the 1970s.

A "deeply divided school system" means just 5 percent of children eligible for free school meals gain five A grades at GCSE. Poorer



GETTING HARDER to climb (above), Alan Milburn (left)

children with similar GCSEs to richer ones "are one third more likely to drop out of education at 16".

New academies and grammar schools risk reinforcing these social divisions. The report praised further education colleges and school sixth forms. Yet the government is cutting funding for both.

The Tory idea that work helps people out of poverty ignores the reality of "millions of low-paid workers".

The report found that only one in four workers will escape low pay over a ten-year period. "The overwhelming majority—mainly women—are stuck in a low-pay poverty trap."

### Pay

The report calls for a "real living wage". In 40 local authorities a third of all jobs are paid below former chancellor George Osborne's National Living Wage.

In housing, the "free market approach is failing", and expensive private renting "has become the norm", so the government should scrap "outdated inhibitions about intervening".

Unfortunately the report's

authors—headed by Labour right winger Alan Milburn—want reforms mainly to protect the system. They fear the consequences of political disillusion.

"Whole tracts of Britain feel left behind," they warned. Of the 65 areas with the poorest education and employment prospects "only three voted to remain in the EU".

The authors want higher social mobility in order to "prove that modern capitalist economies can create better, fairer and more inclusive societies".

Instead its decline is underlining that they can't.

**Got a story?**  
Email ideas to [reports@socialistworker.co.uk](mailto:reports@socialistworker.co.uk)

## Council housing desperately short

**TWO REPORTS released last week show the desperate state of housing for millions of ordinary people in Britain—but ignore the real solution.**

Think tank ResPublica found 1.2 million people on council housing waiting lists. It called for a £10 billion a year housebuilding fund, controlled by housing associations.

But housing associations function like private firms.

Some fund themselves through speculation because the money they get from the government



Council homes are demolished

has been slashed.

Labour's housing spokesperson John Healey commissioned construction firm Taylor Wimpey to carry out the Redfern Review. These housebuilding bosses unsurprisingly argue for more home ownership.

The lifetime council tenancies that are being ground down by Tory housing policy can offer a secure and affordable alternative.

Pushing privatisation and private ownership will only make things worse. **Alistair Farrow**

### FIGURE IT OUT

**1,200,000**  
people are on council housing waiting lists

**1,900,000**  
council homes have been sold under "right to buy"

**630,000**  
homes in England are empty at any given time—many for over six months

**6,550**  
"social rent" council homes were built this year



# Activists to take to the streets to defend NHS

As Tory assault is unveiled, Labour's NHS day needs to start a movement, argues **Tomáš Tengely-Evans**

**LABOUR PARTY members and health campaigners were set to take to the streets this Saturday.**

It is part of a national day of campaigning in defence of the NHS. Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said he wanted the day to include "trade unionists and other activists".

The day of action comes as the Tories ramp up their assault on the NHS.

Further devastating details of the "Sustainability and Transformation Plans" (STPs) were published last week. If the Tories successfully push them through, hundreds of hospital departments and services across England will shut.

Proposals include downgrading accident and emergency (A&E) departments in Macclesfield, Milton Keynes, Teesside and Cambridge.

They would function as "urgent care services", which deal with minor injuries, meaning that patients with more serious problems would have to be transferred.

In Teesside this would force patients to travel to Stockton five miles away or Darlington 16 miles away.

## Emergency

Similarly in Bedford the A&E and maternity departments would lose "consultant-led care" and their ability to carry out emergency surgery.

Not only would this mean longer travel times, it will have a knock-on impact on the number of beds available in the area.

The STP plan for South West London will axe acute services at one of the area's six hospitals and could mean the loss of between 400 and 1,000 beds.

The Tories' real aim is to further break up the NHS and soften it up for privatisation. The STPs could slash £22 billion from the NHS budget by 2020-21.

But a fightback from health workers and campaigners can repel their assault.

Health campaigners have already been mobilising against the plans, which has seen thousands-strong

## BACK STORY

**New Tory Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) are being rolled out in 44 areas across the NHS in England**

● If they're successfully pushed through, hundreds of hospital departments and services will go

● STPs could slash £22 billion from the health service budget by 2020-21

● A national campaign could give confidence to workers to fight the Tory assault—Labour and the unions can play a key role in this

protests in Devon, Huddersfield and Grantham this autumn.

In a sign of growing opposition to the STPs, the British Medical Association (BMA) hit out against the plans. Mark Porter, chair of the BMA Council, said, "There is a real risk that these transformation plans will be used as a cover for delivering cuts, starving services of resources and patients of vital care."

Top NHS boss Chris Hopson admitted last week that campaigners "have the ability to sink plans they don't support".

He said, "It's very difficult for the NHS to proceed with whole scale change if you've got people out on the streets marching with placards and banners and saying 'don't do this'."

The Tories and bosses know the NHS could become a focal point for resistance.

That's why Labour's national campaigning day is important. Having the Labour leader on their side can give people confidence to push for more resistance.

But it has to be the start of a national campaign, not just a one-off publicity opportunity. It will take mass protests—and serious industrial action by health workers—to repel the attack.

For activities in your area go to [labour.org.uk/index.php/nhs-campaign](http://labour.org.uk/index.php/nhs-campaign)



LOCAL NHS campaigns joined up to march together in London in September

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

## LABOUR

# As the right holds its ground, the left has to look beyond the bureaucracy

by **NICK CLARK**

THE LABOUR right has defeated the left in recent battles inside the Labour Party—ensuring it holds its grip on party structures.

Candidates backed by the right won all leading positions at a meeting of the party's National Policy Forum last Saturday. Its policies shape Labour's manifesto.

It followed right victories at regional conferences and annual general meetings of Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs).

## Opposition

The London regional conference saw right winger Ellie Reeves win the vice chair position, backed by 85 percent of London CLPs.

Her win came despite reported opposition from the Unite union, a powerful voice in Labour.

The right also beat left-backed candidates in the Walthamstow and Lewisham CLPs, which are seen as left strongholds.

The left's defeats show that the

right has stronger organisation inside Labour. It still controls Labour's internal structures even though the leadership—and the bulk of the membership—are further left.

Luke Akehurst, secretary of the right wing Labour First, said that after a "positive few weeks" for the Labour right, they should continue to "organise very hard" to hold the left at bay.

There is a danger that the defeats could encourage the Labour left to step up its attempts to win internal battles.

Labour left group Momentum has focused on winning more seats for CLP representatives on the party's national executive committee (NEC). The NEC had been set to meet on Tuesday to debate changes to its rules and make-up. Momentum had focused its efforts on an online campaign in the weeks running up to the meeting, calling on its members to demand more CLP seats.

FBU union general secretary Matt Wrack recently called on all

Momentum supporters to back the campaign. He warned, "Time is running out to transform Labour".

## Removed

But late on Monday evening the proposed changes were removed from the NEC's agenda—meaning the left was defeated before the meeting even began.

The recent victories for the right show that the left is at its weakest when fighting internal battles against Labour's right wing bureaucracy.

Weeks of campaigning can swiftly be quashed by backroom manoeuvring. And Labour's new mass membership clearly has little enthusiasm for getting bogged down in internal battles.

But the left is stronger when it looks outwards.

Jeremy Corbyn's re-election campaign was successful because it drew tens of thousands of people to energetic rallies that promised a fight for a radically different society.

The right didn't stand a chance.



# Unions and the left lead marches in South Korea

Workers are central to a movement that could bring down the president, writes **Workers' Solidarity**

**PROTESTERS TOOK** to the streets of major cities in South Korea last Saturday to demand the resignation of president Park Geun-hye.

It was the fourth round of mass weekend protests since late October. In Seoul, the capital city, 600,000 people protested.

Just before the nationwide protest, Park stressed that she would neither step down nor accept a prosecutor's investigation. She even ordered an investigation into a separate scandal and hinted that some opposition leaders are involved.

Another rally organised by the moderate trade union confederation FKTU also mobilised 30,000 trade unionists for the protest in Seoul.

This is a significant development. FKTU has supported the presidential candidate from the current ruling party since 2007.

Workers on the protests showed clear support for the social-democratic Justice Party over other opposition parties.

High school senior students were also prominent on the protests. They had just finished college entrance tests and were angry at the university admission fraud perpetrated by Park's cronies.

One student said, "We are suffering under competition-driven education imposed by the government, while their children were enjoying free tickets."

## Killed

Many people also protested over a ferry disaster that killed some 300 young people two years ago, and denounced the government's attempted cover-up.

Later, the protesters marched along eight different routes. All of them were led by either the more militant KCTU union federation or left wing political organisations.

This is a big difference from the mass movement in 2008, when organised workers and the left were told to attend as individuals.

The change reflects the fact that the current movement is encouraged by the organised workers'

## BACK STORY

**Massive protests have hit the streets of South Korea**

● People are demanding the resignation of president Park Geun-hye

● Park has been mired in a corruption scandal

● It follows revelations that a secret "adviser" had been meddling in government affairs

● More than one million people protested in the capital Seoul earlier this month, but Park has refused to resign

struggle in recent years.

Prosecutors named Park as "a criminal suspect" last Sunday.

It was another political blow for her. Yet the prosecution didn't charge Park with bribery, significantly lowering the sentence she could be given.

It also lets big capitalists—including Samsung and Hyundai Motors who bribed the president—off the hook.

Opposition parties want Park to be impeached—a procedure that can take as long as eight months.

## Frustrated

But impeachment could be frustrated if popular, working class mobilisation is not strong enough.

Opposition parties including the Justice Party believe they should take on Park, not the movement from below.

They are afraid that the movement might target big capitalists. The Justice Party shamefully demanded that rail workers stop striking on Monday of this week.

The movement is quickly approaching a political crossroad. Parliamentary negotiations can only lead to a dead end. We are arguing for more street protests and workplace strikes. There was set to be another round of mass protests this Saturday.

Workers' Solidarity is Socialist Worker's South Korean sister paper



HIGH SCHOOL students on the streets of Seoul demanding the president resigns

PICTURES: WORKERS' SOLIDARITY

## Workers' revolt fuelled by anger at a corruption crisis that has deep roots

CURRENT PRESIDENT Park Geun-hye is the daughter of Park Chung-hee, the military dictator who ruled South Korea for over 18 years until 1979.

The state capitalist regime offered big economic opportunities for handpicked capitalists.

Park Geun-hye acted as "first lady" for the last five years of that regime after her mother was killed in a failed assassination attempt on the dictator. So the roots of the current scandal date back years.

When Park was elected in 2012 it was widely suspected that there was election fraud involving the state security agency.

Yet many people expected that she would bring back the economic boom of her father's days.

But the economic situation

deteriorated and expectations turned to bitterness and anger.

Now workers' struggles have deepened the political crisis of the ruling party, which lost its parliamentary majority in April's general election.

This anger is behind the current huge movement creating a political crisis for Park's presidency.

It was sparked by the revelation that Park had long kept a secret "adviser", Choi Soon-sil, and was involved in a corruption network with major capitalists.

Infighting among various sections of the ruling class has also produced a series of detailed revelations that fuel public anger. South Korea's rulers are under pressure from increasing economic uncertainty.



There is widespread anger at corruption



## Don't tax the poor

LIVERPOOL MAYOR Joe Anderson plans to ballot voters on a 10 percent increase in council tax.

He threatens that without this cash injection social services will cease to function. It's an excuse to avoid fighting the cuts.

Anderson and Labour have implemented savage cuts and managed a deterioration of services.

For workers this means lower pay, higher workloads and job losses.

Cuts have bitten deep into mental health, children's and adult's services, leisure centres, libraries, parks and roads.

Liverpool relies on central government funding because it is poor. Four out of five homes are in tax bands A and B, so only 11 percent of council funding comes from council tax. A third of children live in poverty.

If we want good services, Anderson suggests, we should pay more tax. He talks about "redistribution" and "support for the vulnerable". But that would mean taxing the rich.

This is just an attempt to squeeze the poor further—and let the Tories off the hook. Instead of managing the cuts, let's fight them.

**Michael Lavalette**  
Liverpool

## Council cash isn't enough

AS YOUR report says (Socialist Worker online), the Supreme Court's recent ruling on the bedroom tax was only a partial victory.

I work to support tenants applying for Discretionary Housing Payments to mitigate this unjust charge. Councils often turn down people who get disability benefits as their income is deemed "too high".

They are not swayed by the fact that these benefits are awarded precisely because the person has greater costs due to their disability. They say that they are very sorry but it is a "fixed pot of money and only those in the most financial need can deserve this support".

This Victorian thinking, must be resisted. I urge everyone who can to fight and organise against the Tories' welfare attacks.

**Housing caseworker**  
Name and address supplied



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

# Prisons are violent cesspits that Tories make even worse

I SPENT over 32 years in over 40 different prisons, and believe me there are no "holiday camp" style prisons.

Recent industrial action by prison staff is needed in order to draw attention to the violent cesspits that Britain's prisons have become under successive Tory governments.

But the temporary withdrawal of labour by prison staff has profound and immediate effects on the prisoners left in their cells.

Some are unable to "slop out" the buckets they use as toilets—there are still 20 prisons in England with no access to 24-hour sanitation.

They can have no visits from

their families, many of whom will have travelled far. Their medical appointments are cancelled.

Those on remand and yet to be convicted of any crime—estimated to be around 14,000 prisoners—won't have had their day in court.

Prisons are under pressure because they come under the control of government. With every cabinet reshuffle we get another minister who wants to change everything to leave their mark.

They lie to the media and the public. They pay lip service to rehabilitation while stripping budgets and privatising everything they can—canteens, food, transport and prisons themselves.

Former justice minister Chris

Grayling was a former TV executive whose only experience of prisons had been watching Porridge. He did his best to take prison conditions back to Victorian times then walked away scot free.

The damage he inflicted will be felt for years to come.

Take the responsibility of running the prison system away from the government and we may be able to make some progress.

Until then, it is only a matter of time before our prisons explode in an orgy of violence that will make the Strangeways riot of 1990 seem like a teddy bears' picnic.

Mark my words.

**Noel "Razor" Smith**  
ex-prisoner, author of The Criminal Alphabet

## Migration is no problem

JEREMY CORBYN rightly criticises Donald Trump's attack on Mexicans.

But he and shadow business secretary Clive Lewis are wrong to argue that stopping exploitative bosses can challenge the "problems" caused by immigration. It concedes that immigration is a problem.

We have campaigned over the disgraceful treatment of migrant workers by Sports Direct.

It built a warehouse in Shirebrook with "coalfield regeneration" money. But jobs on offer there were agency and low paid, and

85 percent of them were filled by migrants.

Right wing forces tried to exploit the situation, just as Trump looked to workers "left behind" by deindustrialisation. But our campaign has shown how organising against exploitation can bring all workers together.

As socialists we say migrants are welcome and oppose immigration controls. The old slogan "workers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains" has never been more relevant.

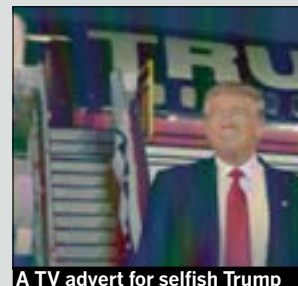
**Jeannie Robinson**  
Chesterfield

## Trumped by the market

I LIVE in a US state that elected Hillary Clinton. The morning after Donald Trump's victory, it felt like a death in the family. But his win was inevitable.

Trump was created by marketing. As advertisers spin a "story" about their product instead of honestly describing them, he exploited discontent with the neoliberal economy without naming it.

He shifted blame for the failings of the free market system. This is a system where everything has a



A TV advert for selfish Trump

price. It's a system where the powerful rule.

But because people believe they could rise to the top, they don't question it. Our system exploits and encourages selfishness.

Now we have the epitome of selfishness in the White House.

**Paulmw Hackett**  
on Facebook

Just a thought...

## Voting system needs change

FOR TOO long our political systems have been sticking a band aid over a huge nasty wound.

If we are to bring change for the benefit of all, how we elect what is in front of us and for how long must change.

We need a rethink of how our democratic political systems work, or should I say, fail to work.

**Brian O'Neill**  
on Facebook

## Racism was behind result

YOUR ARTICLE on "Why did Trump win" (Socialist Worker online) was overly simplistic. There's severe institutionalised racism in the US.

But I agree that Bernie Sanders may have won. A thorough analysis of this result and Brexit would help us combat the repercussions better.

**Aine Foley**  
on Facebook

THE Democrats could have expected to lose when they chose the 1 percenter Hillary Clinton over the people's candidate Bernie Sanders. Now they are stuck with racist Donald Trump while Bernie could have won by a landslide.

**Inge Doornbosch**  
on Facebook

## Fracked-up economics

US BANKS are putting money into fracking again—even though low energy prices mean they might never get it back.

It's bad enough when they poison our air and water. When they're chucking money down the well along with the fracking chemicals it adds insult to injury.

Some think this means we can simply hold off the frackers until the industry implodes.

But we need a mass campaign for a nationwide ban.

**Kim Hunter**  
Scarborough

## We can do without HS2

WE DESPERATELY need more investment in our under-funded railways. But HS2 is a train in vain.

It's a plaything for the rich—and a disaster for the environment.

**Sam Dyson**  
Peterborough



Not guilty verdicts in the Rotherham 12 case represent a landmark victory that has implications for anti-racists across Britain. A group of Asian men in Rotherham has shown that if you fight against injustice, you can win, writes Phil Turner

**T**HE ROTHERHAM 12 are innocent—self-defence is no offence. That's the conclusion after one of the biggest and most important victories for anti-racists in decades.

Ten Asian men last week were cleared at Sheffield Crown Court following a six-week trial.

They were charged with violent disorder following a peaceful anti-fascist protest in Rotherham, South Yorkshire, last September.

The case had hung over them and their families for more than a year. If found guilty, they could have been jailed for five years.

Defendant Sadaqat Ali, a taxi driver, said the stress of the trial had transformed his usual outgoing personality. “When this trial started six weeks ago our lives were put on hold,” he told Socialist Worker.

“It’s been very stressful. I couldn’t work. Now we’ve got justice—not only for the people on trial but for others in Rotherham as well.”

Defendant Asif Zaman added, “I’m relieved. It’s been a long time for all our families and everyone. The jury proved our case was just and right.”

All the defendants who stood trial were unanimously found not guilty. Two more who pled guilty before the trial started will now appeal.

Applause rang out in the public gallery as the verdicts were announced, while cheers greeted the men outside the court. The jury was made up of 11 white people—seven women and four men—and one Asian man.

Defendant Abrar Javid told Socialist Worker, “We’re ecstatic with the result. It restores our faith in humanity for a mainly white working

class jury to find us not guilty.”

The landmark verdicts will give confidence to everyone fighting the fascists—and wider racism.

As Abrar said, “I hope it inspires others never to give up.”

The 12 were arrested in early morning raids five weeks after the anti-fascist protest in Rotherham on 5 September last year. The protest, called by Unite Against Fascism (UAF), was in opposition to a Nazi march by Britain First. It came two weeks after the racist murder of 81 year old Mushin Ahmed.

Racist and fascist organisations had held 18 incursions into Rotherham in the run-up to Mushin Ahmed’s murder. They tried to exploit the child sexual exploitation (CSE) scandal that had hit the town (see box).

#### Brownshirts

The protests coincided with a rise in reported racist incidents and the trial heard how Asian people in Rotherham felt under siege. As the judge told the jury, “You may think it’s like the Jews in Germany facing up to the brownshirts.”

Michael Mansfield QC told the trial that the “air was filled with fear” as “toxic” fascist groups “besieged and plagued” Rotherham. For many the murder of Mushin Ahmed was the last straw. As Mansfield told the court, “The fear was not a fantasy—it was a reality.”

“There comes a point when people have to say to themselves, are we going to be humiliated to the extent that we won’t leave our homes? And is it time to show our respect and solidarity for this elderly man who was

# SELF-DEFENCE IS NO OFFENCE



# VICTORY!

# for the Rotherham 12

#### IN BRIEF

#### How the fascist right whipped up hatred

- Fascist groups targeted Rotherham with 13 protests in the town in as many months
- 81 year old Mushin Ahmed was the victim of a racist murder two weeks before yet another fascist gathering was planned
- Muslims and their supporters in the community had had enough and turned out in large numbers on a Unite Against Fascism protest
- Those on the march described it as “fantastic” and a “beautiful event”, but Rotherham police treated the march as a threat to order.
- They insisted the march go past the notorious William Fry pub where drunken fascists attacked anti-racists

stamped to death?

“To say we are not afraid, we’re not going to be overwhelmed by fear and ultimately stand up for one of our number. To say we’ve had enough of being tarred by a particular brush and we’re going to stand up and go on the streets, making our legitimate voice heard by standing together as a community.”

Some 400 people joined the UAF protest—a breakthrough following 13 previous fascist protests in as many months. It took up the slogan, “Enough is enough—Muslim lives matter.”

Defendant Mohammed Saleem, a gas engineer, said there was a “fantastic” atmosphere on the UAF protest. He told the court it was a “beautiful event”.

But police marched the protest past the William Fry pub, a well known haunt of racists. The trial heard how drunken fascists outside the pub hurled racist abuse at Asian children before physically attacking

some anti-racist protesters.

Mohammed told Socialist Worker, “I had a bin thrown at me, punches thrown at me and I had done nothing.

“Now you imagine five weeks later, at six or seven in the morning, ten police officers come to your house. Your children are scared, you’re scared. You’re treated as some common criminal.”

Mohammed said he didn’t think that sending the anti-racist protesters past the pub was an innocent mistake. “There are similarities with what the police did to miners at Orgreave, and how they herded them to a particular spot,” he said.

Police attacked striking miners during the Battle of Orgreave in June 1984, then framed several for riot. The Rotherham 12 case has put South Yorkshire Police in the spotlight again (see box).

Solicitor Matt Foot said, “One of my clients, Asif Zaman, was protecting his children from the racists.

They’ve been exonerated. In my eyes these people are real heroes, not criminals. I have felt dumbfounded as to why they were ever charged.

“We should celebrate this victory. But that question must be resolved.”

#### Labelling

Some feel the arrests were an attempt to stop people from protesting. Abrar said the men were victims of “political policing”.

“We feel the police are trying to make up for their failings—Hillsborough, Orgreave and the Rotherham CSE scandal,” he said.

“They’ve done what the far right have done by labelling the whole Asian community and using us as a scapegoat. I believe these were wrongful arrests.

“We’ve been treated like common criminals and it’s nothing more than a politically motivated charge.”

The right of self defence was established more than 30 years ago in the

(main picture, defendants from front, left to right) **Mohsin Mahmood, Nasrum Rashid, Mohammed Saleem, Abrar Javid, Asif Zaman** (back) **4th left Sadaqat Ali, 5th left Imran Iqbal, 7th left Ashran Khan**

#### Turning the tide

ROTHERHAM UNITE Against Fascism campaigned with the slogan “Justice for the 1,400—don’t let the racists divide us”.

The 2014 Jay report into child sexual exploitation (CSE) in the town estimated that 1,400 children had been abused between 1997 and 2013. The horrific scandal shocked everyone.

The report exposed appalling attitudes among the police and council bosses towards girls from poor backgrounds. Young women’s voices were not allowed to be heard. Economic devastation and cuts in children’s services also stopped the victims from receiving support.

CSE goes right to the top of society—as the Whitehall sex scandal shows. But racists seized on the Rotherham revelations to paint Asian men as the main perpetrators of abuse.

Many people did not want to directly oppose the racists and fascists who came to Rotherham to spread their hate. Rotherham UAF argued for the need to mobilise.

Black and white unity is essential to demand justice for the victims and to oppose the racists who cynically exploit the scandal. Now the vast majority of people are sick of fascist marches—and want to see united opposition.

And the Rotherham 12 campaign was backed by the Orgreave and Hillsborough justice campaigns, trade unions and campaigning groups.

The tide has been turned against the racists.



Fascist group Britain first marching in Rotherham in September 2015



Rotherham Unite Against Fascism organised a large counter-protest

## There’s something rotten about Rotherham’s cops

THE ROTHERHAM 12 campaign has demanded an independent inquiry into policing following the verdicts.

South Yorkshire Police (SYP) is already under scrutiny following its cover-up of the Hillsborough disaster and its conduct during the Battle of Orgreave.

Recent reports and trials have also exposed police failings and possible corruption relating to the child sexual exploitation scandal in Rotherham.

Campaign spokesman Suresh Grover, of the Monitoring Group, said, “Apart from the actions of the far right groups, our anger is reserved for the South Yorkshire Police and the Crown Prosecution Service.

“The prosecution evidence clearly acknowledged that far right groups were intent on causing community divisions, fear, intimidation and terror through

perpetual acts of violence and murder.

“Instead of protecting the Asian Muslim community, the police turned against us.” He called for a “rigorous independent inquiry”.

Michael Mansfield attacked police failings during the trial.

#### Context

He mocked police commander chief inspector Richard Butterworth for claiming he did not know that the William Fry pub was a gathering point for racists and fascists.

Defendant Abrar told Socialist Worker, “We’ve seen a murder and more racist attacks.

“For the police not to take that into context on that day on Wellgate is a scandal.

“They have information on these groups coming into our town. It’s something we’re not going to tolerate.”



Rotherham anti-racists on the march in September 2015



## WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

### INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

### THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

### INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to [www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk) or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

## { SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

### ABERDEEN

**Organising to win—socialists in the workplace**

Wed 30 Nov, 6pm,  
Belmont Cinema Cafe,  
49 Belmont St, AB10 1JS

### BARNSELEY

**Syria—revolution, counter-revolution and civil war**

Thu 1 Dec, 7pm,  
YMCA, Blucher St,  
S70 1AP

### BOLTON

**80th anniversary of the Battle of Cable Street—how we beat the fascists**

Thu 1 Dec, 7pm,  
Bolton Socialist Club,  
16 Wood St (off Bradshawgate),  
BL1 1DY

### BRADFORD

**90 years since the 1926 General Strike**

Thu 1 Dec, 7pm,  
Glyde House,  
Little Horton Lane  
(opposite the ice rink),  
BD5 0BQ

### CARDIFF

**The digital divide—is technology stealing our jobs?**

Wed 30 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Cathays Community Centre,  
Cathays Terrace,  
CF24 4HX

### DUNDEE

**Women's liberation today**

Wed 30 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Dundee Voluntary Action,  
10 Constitution Rd, DD1 1LL

### EDINBURGH

**Them and us—class struggle in Britain from the Great Unrest to Cable Street**

Wed 30 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
7 Victoria St, EH1 2JL

### EXETER

**Is neoliberalism over?**

Thu 1 Dec, 6.30pm,  
New Horizon Cafe,  
47 Longbrook St,  
EX4 6AW

### GLASGOW

**Marxism and nature**

Thu 1 Dec, 7pm,  
Avant Garde,  
33-44 King St,  
Merchant City, G1 5QT

### HUDDERSFIELD

**Keir Hardie and the early years of the Labour Party**

Wed 30 Nov, 6.30pm,  
Brian Jackson House,  
2 New North Parade (near both train and bus stations),  
HD1 5JP

### LANCASTER

**Marxism and the oppressed**

Thu 8 Dec, 7pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Meeting House Lane,  
LA1 1TX

## SOCIALIST WORKER PUBLIC MEETINGS

# In the era of Trump, Brexit and Corbyn—how can we fight for socialism?

### BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

Wed 30 Nov, 7pm,  
The Priory Rooms,  
Quaker Meeting House,  
40 Bull St,  
B4 6AF

### LONDON: BRIXTON

Wed 30 Nov, 7pm,  
Vida Walsh Centre,  
2b Saltoun Rd (near Effra Rd,  
facing Windrush Square),  
SW2 1EP

### LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

**The origins of the Labour Party**

Thu 1 Dec, 7pm,  
The Swarthmore Education Centre, 2-7 Woodhouse Square,  
LS3 1AD

### LIVERPOOL

**How Trump won—and how he can be fought**

Thu 8 Dec, 7.30pm,  
The Caledonia,  
22 Caledonia St, L7 7DX

### LONDON: BRENT AND HARROW

**Climate change—after Trump, how can we fight for our planet?**

Thu 1 Dec, 7.30pm,  
The Pepperpot Centre,  
1a Thorpe Close,  
Ladbroke Grove (very close to the station), W10 5XL

### LONDON: EALING

**How Trump won—and how he can be fought**

Thu 1 Dec, 7.30pm,  
Y Lounge,  
YMCA West London,  
25 St Mary's Rd, W5 2RE

### LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

Thu 1 Dec, 7pm,  
St Margaret's House,  
21 Old Ford Rd,  
E2 9PL

### SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

Thu 1 Dec, 7pm,  
Central United Reformed Church,  
60 Norfolk St (near Crucible Theatre), S1 2JB

### WAKEFIELD

Wed 7 Dec, 7pm,  
Lightwaves Centre,  
Lower York St,  
WF1 3LJ

### WOLVERHAMPTON AND WALSALL

Wed 30 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Wild Bytes Cafe,  
Darlington St,  
WV1 4HW

### MANCHESTER: CHORLTON Pakistan—neoliberalism in crisis

Wed 30 Nov, 7pm,  
Chorlton Library (side door),  
Manchester Rd,  
M21 9PN

### MANCHESTER: CITY CENTRE

**Hungary 1956—when workers took power**

Thu 1 Dec, 7pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
6 Mount St,  
M2 5NS

### MANCHESTER: LONGSIGHT AND LEVENSHULME

**Hungary 1956—when workers took power**

Thu 1 Dec, 7.30pm,  
Inspire,  
747 Stockport Rd,  
M19 3AR

### NEWCASTLE

**Nursery to university—the fight for education**

Thu 1 Dec, 7pm,  
Broadacre House,  
Market St,  
NE1 6HQ

### LONDON: HARINGEY

**The gig economy—from coal mines to call centres**

Wed 30 Nov, 7.30pm,  
St John Vianney Church Hall,  
386 West Green Rd (corner Vincent Rd), N15 3QH

### LONDON: ISLINGTON

**Bring down the borders—why we oppose all immigration controls**

Thu 1 Dec, 7pm,  
The Old Fire Station,  
84 Mayton St, N7 6QT

### LONDON: LEWISHAM

**How powerful is the media?**

Wed 30 Nov, 7.30pm,  
West Greenwich Community and Arts Centre,  
141 Greenwich High Rd (near Greenwich main line and DLR station), SE10 8JA

### LONDON: NEWHAM

**The Anti Nazi League and Rock Against Racism**

Wed 30 Nov, 7pm,  
Stratford Advice Arcade,  
107-109 The Grove (next to Morrisons car park), E15 1HP

### NORWICH

**How Trump won—and how he can be fought**

Thu 1 Dec, 7.30pm,  
Vauxhall Centre,  
Johnson Place, NR2 2SA

### OXFORD

**A rebel's guide to Malcolm X**

Wed 7 Dec, 7.30pm,  
Restore, Manzil Way  
(off Cowley Rd),  
OX4 1YH

### POOLE

**Arguments for revolution**

Wed 14 Dec, 7.30pm,  
Butler & Hops,  
88 High St,  
BH15 1DB

### SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

**A rebel's guide to Rosa Luxemburg**

Thu 15 Dec, 7pm,  
Central United Reformed Church,  
60 Norfolk St (near Crucible Theatre),  
S1 2JB

### SWANSEA

**Why we need a revolution**

Thu 1 Dec, 7.30pm,  
Brynmill Community Centre,  
St Albans Rd,  
SA2 0BP

### YORK

**Can socialism come through parliament? The lessons from Chile 1973**

Wed 30 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Sea Horse Hotel,  
4 Fawcett St,  
YO10 4AH

## { MOVEMENT EVENTS }

### GLASGOW

**Launch of Jimmy Reid Foundation report against the renewal of Trident**

Wed 30 Nov, 6.30pm,  
D103 Lecture Theatre,  
25 Gordon St (above University College London Students Union),  
WC1H 0AY

### LONDON

**Stand Up To Racism public meeting—confronting the rise in racism**

the STUC Building,  
333 Woodlands Road,  
G3 6NG

### NOTTINGHAM

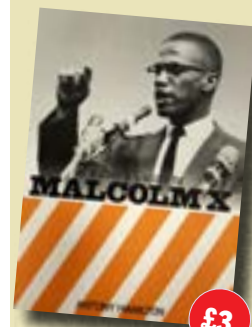
**Stand Up To Racism public meeting—confronting the rise in racism**

Wed 30 Nov, 7pm,  
Nonsuch Theatre,  
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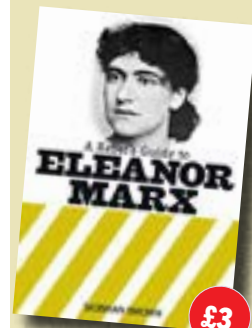
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# Russia's Red Year inspires in full colour a century on

A new graphic novel brings the Russian Revolution to life with an emphasis on the role played by ordinary working people, writes **Gabby Thorpe**

**AS THE** centenary of the Russian Revolution approaches, Tim Sanders and John Newsinger set out to bring it to life in a new graphic novel 1917—Russia's Red Year.

When people think of 1917 most will conjure up images of the First World War, glorified today by media portrayals of a "great" war.

Much of the literature supports this view, with a patriotic look at history that paints those who objected to war as "traitors".

But this novel depicts the events through the eyes of two ordinary people, Natalia and Peter.

Natalia is a factory worker, involved in the International Women's Day marches that spark Tsar Nicholas II's abdication.

Peter is a soldier who crosses lines and joins with the masses.

Although in many countries a majority supported the war, in Russia it was the final straw in a building anger against the Tsarist regime.

## Overthrow

Workers, peasants and soldiers alike rose up to overthrow the Tsar in February 1917, and then in October, the Provisional Government that followed.

It heralded a new age for Russia, of workers' councils, democracy and the most progressive rights for women seen in the world at that time. Revolution had arrived.

Throughout the novel Natalia and Peter argue strongly for revolution and take an active part in its realisation.

Allowing the reader to view the revolution through the eyes of two ordinary participants is the novel's strength.



SOLVING THE housing crisis the revolutionary way

Although there are glimpses of more familiar revolutionaries, such as Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky, there is a firm emphasis put on the role of ordinary working class people.

The message is that we have the power to make change.

Russia's Red Year also succeeds in reminding us that war is not the glorious and heroic event that the ruling classes constantly like to portray it as.

## Enemy

It's filled with scenes of soldiers uniting against a common enemy and shows the fight against poverty and imperialism that spread across Europe.

As well as bringing to life the faces of the Russian Revolution, Russia's Red Year sets out clear and accessible arguments for socialism.

Through beautiful full colour pictures, and an array of workers, soldiers and politicians, the book achieves a sense of connection which informs and inspires us as socialists to keep on fighting for a better world.

In a year where revolution can sometimes seem far away, Sanders and Newsinger provide us with renewed inspiration to take up the fight against the Tories and the bosses.

As the novel's introduction argues, "The lesson of self-emancipation of the working class must never be forgotten." With this work, it will definitely be remembered.

1917: Russia's Red Year is available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Call 020 7637 1848 or go to [bookmarksbookshop.co.uk](http://bookmarksbookshop.co.uk)

## THEATRE

### DARE DEVIL RIDES TO JARAMA

by Neil Gore

On tour until spring 2017  
[townsendproductions.org.uk](http://townsendproductions.org.uk)

TOWNSEND Productions' latest play tells the story of two Communists—dirt track racer Clem "Dare Devil" Beckett and intellectual Chris Caudwell. They join the International Brigades to fight Franco's fascists in Spain.

David Heywood and Neil Gore give virtuoso acting performances, playing all the parts. All their work combines song with quick-fire scenes with imaginative settings.

The songs of folk artist Ewan MacColl capture the spirit of young Communists from Manchester in the early 1930s.

One of the most memorable songs tells the



Clem "Dare Devil" Beckett

story of the 1932 Kinder Scout Mass Trespass.

Thousands of protesters, including Clem, defied the landowners to walk across the Derbyshire countryside.

The first act focuses on Clem as he tries to organise a dirt track riders association to stand up to their unscrupulous bosses.

Blacklisted, he becomes a wall of death rider, and works at Fords as a mechanic.

Clem volunteers to drive ambulances to Spain to support the Republican side. Chris is a volunteer driver too.

The second act is all set in Spain from their arrival up to the Battle of Jarama in 1937.

The second act is pacier than the first. It centres on exchanges between the two comrades while they are stationed at the British Battalion training camp.

Two contrasting characters, they are linked by their desire to fight for a better world and crush the fascist uprising.

The spirit of resistance burns through everything they do and the play.

**Dave Gibson**

# Tate Modern's Radical Eye—pricey but also brilliant

## EXHIBITION

### THE RADICAL EYE—MODERNIST PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE SIR ELTON JOHN COLLECTION

Until 7 May 2017. Tate Modern, Bankside, London, SE1 9TG

ELTON JOHN has used his vast fortune to amass one of the largest private collections of photographs in the world.

Yet he claims that he is not just another super-acquisitive, bored, rich bastard.

He says he is as committed to the intrinsic

beauty of his purchases as he might be to the potential profit of re-sales.

In addition, the nature of the images which make this such a remarkable show involve very contradictory sentiments.

One work on display is Dorothea Lange's Migrant Mother—originally titled "Destitute pea pickers in California. A 32 year old mother of seven children"—taken in March 1936, near Nipomo.

A print of this sold for over £313,000 this year even though its negative is publicly held in the



"Migrant Mother" (detail)

US Library of Congress archives because it was produced for a government agency.

John enthuses about the desperation of the poor migrant whose face he sees over breakfast whenever he is in his Atlanta, Georgia, mansion.

Indeed it does carry all the same careworn, hopeless, abandoned weight of images we see too many of in 2016. Yet you don't hear the singer remarking much about modern migrant woes.

There are other problems with the show.

The frames, like their owner, are ridiculously over the top. Most images are small yet are bunched up or high on walls so that close viewing is difficult.

The £16 entrance price is also unforgivable given the wealth of both the patron and the institution.

Portraits, studio nude poses, patterned natural light on architecture and streets, social realism, surrealism, constructivism, journalism—most genres are sampled. However the quality of work on show is undeniably brilliant.

**Nick Grant**



**MORE** than seven million Britons now in precarious employment,” proclaimed an article on the front page of the Guardian newspaper last week.

It argued that rising precariousness has come about because “businesses insist on using more self-employed workers and increasingly recruit staff on temporary and zero-hours contracts (ZHCs)”.

Such claims are a commonplace. In 2011, Guy Standing’s book *The Precariat* argued, “We may guess that at present, in many countries, at least a quarter of the adult population is in the precariat.”

Last year two academics who share this framework announced, “In the UK, almost two out of three women belong to the precariat,” along with “one-third of men”.

A recent *New Statesman* article by shadow chancellor John McDonnell asserts, “Precarious jobs and zero-hour contracts have become the norm in huge sectors of our labour market.”

It is important that the plight of workers on zero-hour contracts or those forced into bogus self-employment by unscrupulous employers is being exposed.

Less welcome was a speech by work and pensions secretary Damian Green last week. He celebrated the end of jobs involving “a fixed monthly salary with fixed hours, paid holidays, sick pay, a pension scheme and other contractual benefits”.

Green hailed the rise of the “gig economy” and the “every-day entrepreneur”.

#### Sweeping

However, sweeping claims about rising precariousness—on both sides of the political divide—can be deeply misleading.

Often when people think about precarious working, they think of temporary contracts.

In fact the proportion on such contracts has been extraordinarily stable.

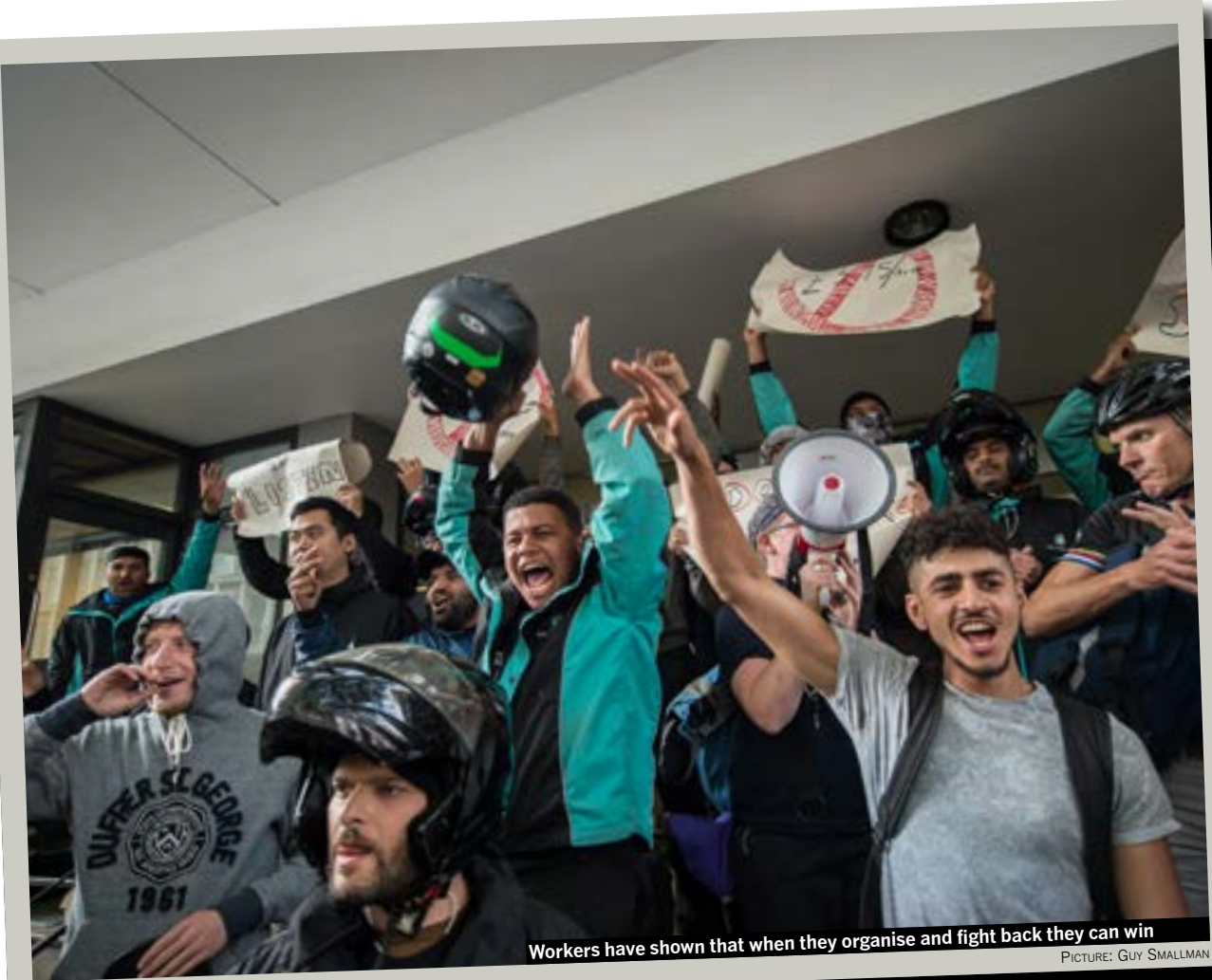
Over the past three decades temporary employment has risen just 0.3 percent to 6.3 percent of the workforce.

ZHCs, which do not offer any guaranteed number of hours of work, have come to prominence only recently and the data on them is less reliable. But they do seem to be used increasingly frequently.

Yet there are two important limits to the use of ZHCs.

First, they can be challenged. Earlier this year, Sports Direct pledged to offer shop staff guaranteed hours after protests by unions, media investigations and criticism from the government.

The pledge does not extend to depot staff employed via



Workers have shown that when they organise and fight back they can win

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

# PRECARIOUS WORK—THE NEW NORM?

We are told that the rise of precarious work is changing the world. But Joseph Choonara argues that workers’ potential power to change the world is as relevant as ever



Tory Damian Green

agencies, but even here workers are not powerless. The Unite union has been recognised at Sports Direct’s major Shirebrook depot since 2008.

Moreover, when ZHCs are used in big workplaces such as universities or hospitals, there will be other more securely employed workers. They can potentially join in a fight to extend better contracts to all.

Second, although ZHCs are used in a wide variety of workplaces, they are heavily



**Workers have the power to bring the system crashing to a halt**

concentrated in two sectors—“hotels and restaurants” and “health and social work”.

The first of these suffered high levels of casualisation long before ZHCs—think, for instance, of students who work cash-in-hand in bars or cafes while studying.

The second area includes hospitals in which “bank staff”, who cover short-term staffing needs, are increasingly placed on ZHCs. It also includes huge numbers of those working in

residential care for the sick and elderly.

This is an area that predatory private equity firms have turned to as a source of easy profits, and the care industry in Britain is widely regarded as a crisis waiting to happen.

Staff turnover in residential care can run as high as one quarter of employees each year, a similar figure to the Sports Direct workforce.

But most workplaces cannot be run this way. Firing workers, hiring replacements and training them is an expensive business. It can also cause disruption and involves losing know-how and skills that have been built up over years.

**EVEN IN the wake of the recent economic crisis, while bosses were happy to hammer wages and conditions, they were often at pains to minimise redundancies.**

This reveals a basic truth about how capitalism functions. The exploitation suffered by workers is not simply a form of oppression but a two-way relation of dependence. The worker depends on their boss for a wage. But the boss also depends on being able to squeeze work, and hence profits, out of the worker.

In a modern capitalist economy employers also depend on getting the right kind of workers with the right education and expertise—and when they get them they often try to hold on to them.

What about those who are not formally employed by a firm? The recent growth in self-employment is undeniable, reaching an unprecedented 15 percent of the labour force—though the figure was 13 percent at the end of the 1980s.

There is a concern, expressed in last week’s *Guardian* article, that much of the recent rise is down to an expansion of the “gig economy”.

If this means people working in multiple jobs, there is little evidence for this.

A recent briefing by the Resolution Foundation found that only one in 250 workers have two self-employed jobs. And about one in 100 have a main job as an employee with a second self-employed role.

Generally people have a single job.

Furthermore, most of the self-employed are not working in the “gig economy”. The vast majority describe themselves as “running their own business”.

Only about one in five give their main description as “doing freelance work” and one in ten give it as “sub-contractor or contract worker”.

The majority are also content to be self-employed and are not looking for work with an employer. Quite a lot of the recent growth is due to the aging of the labour force. Older

people are more likely to be self-employed and often move into self-employment prior to retirement.

That is not to ignore the abuses in this area. A recent employment tribunal brought by Uber taxi drivers challenged the firm’s classification of its workers as self-employed.

The ruling stated, “The notion that Uber in London is a mosaic of 30,000 small businesses linked by a common ‘platform’ is to our minds faintly ridiculous.”

Even in these areas, though, workers are not powerless. This is shown by the struggle at Deliveroo, the food delivery company, where couriers forced the firm’s owners into a humiliating retreat over new terms when they utilised a very traditional method of struggle—a strike.

Overall, the picture of the British labour force is one dominated by secure, permanent jobs, with pockets of insecurity—not sweeping precariousness.

On average, a worker in Britain can expect to be with their current employer for 16 years, about the same as in 1975. There has been a modest fall in employment tenure for men, but this is compensated for by the rise in tenure for women, who today form half of the workforce.

**THIS reflects improvements in maternity leave legislation but also the growing stability of part-time work, largely undertaken by women.**

This is often lumped together with temporary work as a form of precarious employment. But on average part-time women workers will spend as long with an employer as full-time women workers.

Part-time work has been a form in which large numbers of women have been drawn into stable, long-term employment.

The relative stability of employment relations in Britain has two implications.

First, we don’t



PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER



PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

**Precarious work can affect lecturers (top) and cleaners (above) but they share their ability to win through striking**

simply need a struggle to secure the rights of the minority of precarious workers. There are lots of securely employed workers suffering lousy pay, diminishing autonomy in the workplace, long hours, bullying managers and so on.

Second, we can fight these battles from a position of potential strength. We remain in a world in which capitalists depend for their profits on the continuing exploitation of workers, concentrated in large workplaces.

This means workers have the power to bring the system crashing to a halt.

The challenge is to wield this power, not let it slip through our fingers.

Uber boss Steve Kalinick demonstrates how he squeezes workers

#### READ MORE

● **Myths of Globalisation and the New Economy**  
by Bill Dunn  
[bit.ly/2eNfNm4](http://bit.ly/2eNfNm4)

● **The Workers of the World**  
by Chris Harman  
[bit.ly/2fCFT6](http://bit.ly/2fCFT6)

● **New Capitalism?**  
by Kevin Doogan  
£17.99

● **What Is Class in the 21st Century?**  
by Joseph Choonara  
[bit.ly/2g4YdrB](http://bit.ly/2g4YdrB)

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## Chagos Islands—‘sanitised’ by Britain’s barbarism

Britain has refused to give the Chagos Islanders the right of return. Nick Clark looks at the history of this great crime



US AIRFORCE planes on Diego Garcia

#### BACK STORY

**Britain forcibly cleared the Chagos Islands and leased them to the US for a strategic military base**

● The islands are crucial for US imperialism and were part of the “war on terror” torture programme

● Evidence of torture haunts the British government  
[bit.ly/2eNo5KR](http://bit.ly/2eNo5KR)

● Tortured for seven years—and the British government knew it  
[bit.ly/2fnVFMn](http://bit.ly/2fnVFMn)

to help. In return the US gave Britain an £8 million discount on the Polaris nuclear weapons system.

So the Chagossians were rounded up onto ships and deported to Mauritius, over 1,000 miles away. After deportation many died of illness or suicide.

The Chagossians all have British citizenship and a few hundred now live in Britain.

But for fifty years successive British governments have fought

to keep them from ever returning home.

In 1982 Margaret Thatcher’s government offered the Chagossians some small compensation.

But to get it they had to sign a contract in English—a language many couldn’t read or write—that waived their right to return.

Chagossians have fought the government twice in the High Court, in the Law Lords, the European Court of Human Rights and the Supreme Court.

Whenever a legal battle was won, governments responded with challenges and appeals. Tony Blair’s Labour government even got the queen to overrule the High Court in 2004.

In 1966 foreign office diplomat Sir Paul Gore-Booth said “the whole object” of the deportations “was to get some rocks that will remain ours”.

For all her “regret”, that was Baroness Anelay’s aim too. In the same statement she announced that the US lease on Diego Garcia would be renewed until 2036.

She also offered Chagossian communities £40 million compensation. Perhaps she thinks that will make them go away.

But as Chagossian leader Allen Vincatassin said, “In no way will we be accepting this as an exchange of our right to return.”

The exile of the Chagossians is one of the great crimes of British and US imperialism. It can only be put right when they’re allowed to return home.

“The US had been eyeing up the island of Diego Garcia since the 1960s”



# Thousands march to defend education

**STUDENTS AND lecturers marched in central London last Saturday to defend education.**

Several thousand joined the United for Education national demonstration, called by the NUS students' union and the UCU lecturers' union. Organisers claimed as many as 15,000 took part.

The march came as MPs voted on the Tories' Higher Education bill this Monday.

The bill will allow some universities to raise fees even higher than £9,000 a year.

It will also make it easier for private, for-profit, institutions to gain university status.

Most students joined the march because they want to stop tuition fees from being raised again.

Francesca from Soas university in central London told Socialist Worker, "My brother went to university before the fees were raised to £9,000.

## Poorest

"He paid the same amount in three years as I pay in one. It's making it harder for the poorest students to go to university."

Many students were also furious at the high cost of student living. Harjeevan from Queen Mary University in London said, "My student loan doesn't even cover my



PART OF the march in London last Saturday

PICTURE: GEOFF DEXTER

rent. I have to work crazy hours during the holidays to save enough up.

"The government spends millions on Trident nuclear weapons but they won't fund education properly".

Lecturers from the UCU union also pointed to the effect of funding

cuts, privatisation and casualisation in universities.

One lecturer from Bath University told Socialist Worker, "The use of temporary contracts in universities is increasing.

"Sometimes a student will be at a university longer than their lecturer.

That's not good for anyone."

The march was loud, lively and people brought homemade placards.

One of the liveliest sections was the block from Stand Up To Racism.

Students on the block said they wanted to fight against tuition

fees—and against Islamophobia and in defence of refugees and migrants.

Speakers at the rally spoke out against attacks on migrants, and against the use of the Prevent strategy in universities to make lecturers spy on Muslim students.

## Security

NUS president Malia Bouattia said Prevent forced lecturers to become "an extension of the security services".

Jyoti Rajput from Goldsmiths was marching with the Stand Up To Racism banner. She said, "If the government can afford to pay for racist wars around the world, why can't they afford to pay for education?"

Other speakers at the rally looked at how to keep fighting. Donny Gluckstein, a lecturer from Edinburgh College, described how an all-out strike helped them to beat a pay freeze.

"If you stand together, if you're determined, you have the power to win," he told the rally.

Some students looked to militant action. Damien said, "We should look at occupying in our universities and colleges. We need to keep protesting."

For a longer version of this article go to [bit.ly/2eYIVHg](http://bit.ly/2eYIVHg)

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# The bad dream team

In New York's Trump Tower, a vile presidential transition team is putting together a cabinet and filling more than 1,000 senior posts. **Tomáš Tengely-Evans** gets to know the inner core

## THE CONSPIRACY THEORIST

### A white nationalist web troll gets to run the White House

ONE OF the first appointments made by the transition team offers a chilling glimpse of what Trump's presidency could look like.

David Duke,



Stephen Bannon, top Trumper who founded Breitbart News

a former Ku Klux Klan leader, hailed **Stephen Bannon's** appointment as chief strategist as "excellent news".

Bannon is the man behind the white nationalist Breitbart News website. It's a home for those who think Rupert Murdoch's right wing Fox News

is too wedded to "politically correct liberalism", as he put it. Breitbart serves up a cocktail of Islamophobia and other forms of racism.

#### Confederate

When Confederate flag-waving racist Dylan Roof murdered nine black church-goers in Charleston, South Carolina, Breitbart called for readers to hoist the Confederate flag "High and Proud".

Breitbart uses antisemitic conspiracy theories yet staunchly backs Israel to defend US imperialism's interests in the Middle East.

Republican Newt Gingrich said without irony that Bannon couldn't be antisemitic because he worked in banking and Hollywood. The supposed dominance of these sectors by Jewish people is one of the

most well-worn antisemitic myths.

Trump is putting forward Senator **Jeff Sessions** of Alabama for attorney general.

Sessions was nominated to be a federal judge in 1986, but this move was defeated because of racist remarks he had made.

Sessions prosecuted civil rights activists for trying to register black voters and said he only disapproved of the Ku Klux Klan after he "found out some of them were 'pot smokers'".

He later said this was a joke.

The Democracy in America campaign group said, "The handful of people who might be even less equipped than Sessions to dispense justice typically spend their weekends wearing pointy hats and burning crosses."

## THE RICH KIDS

### Family values—the Trump way

Why have just one Trump? Daughter **Ivanka** (right), sons **Eric** (left) and **Donald junior** (centre) and son-in-law **Jared Kushner** are part of the transition team and make it a real family affair.



Meet the Trumps

## THE CRUSADER

### At war with women and unions

Leading the transition team is vice president-elect **Mike Pence**—a favourite of the Christian fundamentalist right and staunch opponent of women's rights.

As congressman then governor of Indiana he pushed through a series of attacks. In 2007 he tried to stop money going to Planned Parenthood, a charity that provides reproductive health care services.

He then pushed through a law that



Mike Pence

makes any woman who has a miscarriage or abortion in the state give the foetus a funeral.

He also backed a law allowing businesses to discriminate against LGBT+ people.

When not railing against condoms, Pence supports big business and bashes trade unions. He opposed the minimum wage—claiming "it would hurt working people"—and a bill guaranteeing trade union rights.

## THE 'MAD DOG'

### Plan to kill them all

General **James Mattis** is expected to become Trump's defence secretary.

Mattis was nicknamed "mad dog" by his troops.

He told soldiers, "It's a hell of a hoot. It's fun to shoot some people. I'll be right up there with you. I like brawling... it's a hell of a lot of fun to shoot them."

He commanded US marines during the destruction of the Iraqi city of Fallujah.

He says his dictum is, "Be polite, be professional but have a plan to kill everybody you meet."

## THE MONEY MAN

### Lobbying for a hurricane

The transition team's number two is **Ron Nicol**.

Nicol is a senior adviser for the Boston Consulting Group, whose former members include Israeli war criminal Binyamin Netanyahu.

One of its major areas is advising government officials on how to push through privatisation in schools and smash teachers' unions. It saw the devastation of Hurricane Katrina as an "opportunity to transform education".

## THE GUN-RUNNER

### Contra indications

In charge of management and budget is a man who knows a thing or two about running money.

**Edwin Meese** was Reagan's attorney general and trusted friend during the Iran-Contra scandal. US officials in the 1980s sold arms to Iran to bankroll a secret war against Nicaragua's left wing government.

The right wing Contras they funded were death squads with a taste for torture and mass slaughter.



Edwin Meese

## THE GENERALS

### If you liked the Iraq war, you'll love this lot

Retired generals are a key part of the team, including former spy chief **Mike Flynn** in charge of national security.

In a book on "how we can win the global war against radical Islam and its allies", Flynn said he was "not a devotee of so-called political correctness".

That will be why he could tweet, "Fear of Muslims is RATIONAL."

He also retweeted a

post mocking Hillary Clinton's media allies with the phrase "Not anymore, Jews. Not anymore."

Another defence adviser is retired general **Keith Kellogg**. He is one of

those who helped to trash Iraq.

He was hired to run the occupation force whose rule created poverty and violence.

Since then he's made a killing with mercenary contractors.



General mayhem—Donald Trump with Mike Flynn (left) and Keith Kellogg (right)

## THE HOPEFULS

### Climate of destruction

With almost two months until Trump's inauguration the team has plenty of time to find other horrible henchmen.

Some of those in the running include the Tea Party's **Sarah Palin**. This climate change "sceptic" and Big Oil's biggest fan could be put in charge of the environment.

**Rudy Giuliani** hopes for a role such as attorney general or secretary of state to reward him for being one of the first

prominent Republicans to support Trump.

As mayor of New York he had homeless people rounded up, slashed school funding and backed racist police to the hilt.



Sarah Palin



## IN BRIEF

**Strike in York will be short but sweet**

GMB UNION members at the Tangerine sweet factory in York struck on Monday and were set to hold a two-hour strike on Wednesday.

They are in dispute after voting by 86 percent to reject a 1 percent pay offer. Workers have also suffered a series of attacks on their conditions. They held a 24-hour strike on Tuesday of last week.

The factory produces Mint Humbugs, Barratt Sherbert Fountains, Butterkist Popcorn and Princess Marshmallows.

●Send messages of support to ben.kirkham@gmb.org.uk

**Cardboard workers box clever with vote**

THOUSANDS OF cardboard packaging workers have voted for strikes over pay.

The GMB and Unite union members have rejected a 2 percent pay rise. The dispute involves around 3,000 workers across 40 corrugated packaging factories.

Workers plan an overtime ban from Saturday of this week and a strike on Monday of next week.

GMB national officer Stuart Fegan said, "We don't want to cause problems for people's Christmas shopping—but if we have to, we will."

"Our members are fed up of seeing their employers make increasing profits while their wages fall behind in real terms."

**Will whisky workers get bosses on rocks?**

WORKERS AT drinks giant Diageo have voted for strikes to defend pensions.

Action could hit over 15 sites in Scotland as well as others in Runcorn, London and Northern Ireland.

GMB union members voted 63 percent for strikes, Unite members 77 percent for strikes.

Diageo bosses want to end the workers' final salary scheme despite increasing their profits to over £2.8 billion.

**Firefighters ballot for action over cuts**

FIREFIGHTERS IN North Yorkshire were set to begin a ballot for action short of strikes on Tuesday of this week.

The members of the FBU union are fighting plans to replace fire engines with smaller Tactical Response Vehicles.

**March in Sheffield for £10 an hour**

TRADE UNIONISTS and activists are set to protest for £10 an hour in Sheffield on 17 December. Backed by the trades council and Fast Food Rights campaign, the protest will assemble at Devonshire Green at 12 noon.

## GLASGOW COUNCIL



IT SERVICE workers are fighting privatisation

PICTURE: DREW McEWAN

# Fresh walkout adds to Labour council's woes

by RAYMIE KIERNAN

COUNCIL WORKERS in Glasgow opened a new front last week in the battle against Labour council chiefs' privatising. IT workers in Unison struck for 24 hours.

The services have already been outsourced to the Access partnership, run by the council along with privatisers Serco, for eight years. Now the council wants to hand them over fully to a private firm.

Unison Access convenor Tony Santilly told Socialist Worker, "We feel IT provision is best placed within a council department and run as an accountable public body."

"Full privatisation is just not an option for our members."

Councillors claim the privatisation will save the council money. But workers question the rationale.

Tony said any private company's motive for running council services "is to make a profit".

Striker Lesley said, "We're trying to make sure our terms and conditions such as hours and pensions are protected by the council."

"We want the council to listen. This is not the only option."

**Outsourcing**

Labour in Glasgow has long had a love affair with outsourcing public services. Conditions at its council-run companies are fuelling other disputes.

At one of them, Community Safety Glasgow, workers continued weekly walkouts last weekend that began on 1 October. Their dispute is over unequal shift payments compared to council employees.

And janitors entered the second week of a two-week strike on Monday.

It's part of a battle to get the same payments that other council workers receive for dirty or physically demanding work.

They got a glimpse of the solidarity during last week's strike that could be the key to the ongoing disputes at the council winning.

Janitors mounted mass pickets at a group of schools earmarked for a trial that could have seen huge job cuts. Nursery staff and school bus drivers refused to cross the picket line.

Bosses at Cordia, a council-run firm, dropped the trial last week.

Workers need to draw the lessons from that and look to how they can tap into more of that solidarity.

Thanks to Drew McEwan

## FUJITSU

# IT workers say 'nein' to gender pay gap

STRIKERS FROM Fujitsu went to Munich in Germany last week to leaflet the firm's Fujitsu Forum.

It came as workers took their third strike last week.

Supporters also leafleted its London headquarters.

The IT service workers struck for 48 hours on Wednesday and Thursday of last week.

The strikers are members



Pickets in Manchester

of the Unite union, fighting over a number of issues in the shadow of 1,800 job losses.

Their demands include pay equality, pension protection and job security—and the reinstatement of Unite rep Lynne Hodge.

They were set to meet on Wednesday to discuss their next moves.

Dave Sewell

## EDUCATION

# Teachers march over cuts

By SADIE ROBINSON

TEACHERS marched through central London on Thursday of last week in protest at cuts to education funding. THE NUT union called the protest.

Tory changes to school funding will snatch the most money from the poorest children, according to research by the NUT and ATL unions.

Primary schools with the most deprived children would lose £579 per pupil in real terms. The figure for secondary schools is £784.

"It will mean cuts to staffing, which will mean children having bigger class sizes," explained Kingston teacher Khawer Siddiqi.

"It will mean a reduction in the number of courses offered. And there will be more unqualified teachers



Teachers on the march

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

in the classrooms," he said.

Sarah, another teacher, added, "It will affect children with special educational needs who need more support."

"In my school children speak lots of languages and we have refugees. But there's not enough money to support them."

●North West NUT rally for education—Saturday 26 November, 12 noon, Sackville Gardens, Manchester M1 3HB

## EDINBURGH COLLEGE

# Strike to stop victimisation

LECTURERS AT Edinburgh College have voted to strike over the unjustified sacking of a colleague and the victimisation of union rep Penny Gower who represented him.

The ballot result came in the week that a committee of MSPs described management's handling of the college finances as "a total failure".

Penny is branch secretary of the EIS-Fela union at Edinburgh. Targeting her is clearly a ploy to distract attention from the way the college is run and weaken the union branch.

There is also a national dimension to this.

Since the success of the Scottish-wide lecturers'

equal pay strike in March, leading branch officials across Scotland have found themselves under attack in various ways.

Penny is a prominent figure at national level as EIS-Fela ex-president and one of the team of national bargainers.

So defeat in Edinburgh would help pave the way for rolling back the gains made in March.

The ballot was only an indicative one but the EIS was expected to approve a statutory one this week.

●Send messages of protest to Edinburgh College regional chair ian.mckay@edinburghcollege.ac.uk and copy them to pennygower1@gmail.com

## UCU UNION

# Vote for left in UCU election

THE CAMPAIGN is on to elect Jo McNeill as the UCU union's general secretary. Jo is standing as the UCU Left candidate against incumbent Sally Hunt.

The election comes at a time when education is under huge attack—and the union's response should be much stronger.

Jo told Socialist Worker, "We've entered into lots of fights that we've eventually backed away from. What's been lacking is an effective strategy to motivate our members and give them confidence."

Jo has been on the union's national executive committee for four years.

She has won widespread support. "I was meant to get 50 signatures to stand—I

ended up with almost 230," she said. If elected she hopes to build a more effective strategy to take on the Tories' attacks.

"We need to build high-profile campaigns prior to ballots going out," she said. "And we need to make sure that any fights we go into are built from the ground up."

The election opens on 1 February next year and closes on 1 March.

●To get involved with Jo's campaign go to jo4ucugensec.wordpress.com

●A BALLOT for strikes at the University of Aberdeen ended as Socialist Worker went to press.

UCU union members were balloting in response to planned cuts.



## CIVIL SERVICE

# Equality workers on strike against devastating cuts

by NICK CLARK

**CIVIL SERVICE** workers at the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) struck for the second time last week against plans to slash jobs.

The members of the PCS union are fighting bosses' attempts to push through cuts that will see the EHRC's budget cut by 25 percent.

The cuts will mean several job losses including 23 compulsory redundancies as part of a restructure. The EHRC has seen its budget reduced by 70 percent since 2010.

One striker told Socialist Worker, "Before this restructure started we had 204 staff. They said they wanted to let 24 people go—24 volunteered to go, but they're still trying to push another 23 out."

## Quarter

"So that means we lose a quarter of our staff in Scotland, Wales and England in the space of a few months."

"We have powers to represent victims of discrimination and human rights abuses," she added. "But the cuts mean we have fewer caseworkers."

The striker explained that in the first round of selection for new posts in the restructure, 72 percent of those from ethnic minorities failed.

So did 43 percent of disabled workers and two thirds of older workers.

"We're the Equality and Human Rights Commission and we're failing miserably on equality," she said.

"We're thinking of reporting the



ON THE picket line in Glasgow

PICTURE: PCS SCOTLAND

commission to itself, because the commission is the body that enforces the equality duty.

"So it's beyond irony that this is happening to our members working at the commission."

Last week's strike saw a 100 percent turnout at the office in London and 20 PCS members on the picket line in Manchester.

A Syrian family also joined the picket line in Birmingham, and said

they were upset to see the EHRC under attack.

Bosses had to cancel an away day planned for workers in Liverpool on the day of the strike because the action was so strong.

The workers are on action short of strike until the end of this month, and could strike again.

"We were in talks with Acas two weeks ago and nothing was put on the table," said the striker. "What

they called concessions we call minimum statutory requirements."

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

**AROUND 160,000 PCS union members were this week coming to the end of a vote over the government imposed changes to the Civil Service Compensation Scheme.**

This is the money paid when workers are made redundant.

The union also says it is launching a new campaign to fight job cuts.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

# Ready to fight for children's services and over assaults on social work teams

**UNION MEMBERS** in Sandwell council's children's services have voted overwhelmingly for formal strike ballots against being privatised into a trust.

The government has forced through similar moves at other councils, but this would be the first collective fightback against it.

## Ballot

Unison union members voted by 97 percent for a strike ballot. GMB union members recorded a 100 percent vote and Unite union members 87 percent.

Unions have told the government-appointed commissioner that if privatisation goes ahead a fight looks inevitable.

Tony Barnsley, joint branch secretary of Sandwell Unison, said, "The enforcement of a trust is being ideologically driven by the Tories set on privatising or cutting everything."

"There is simply no evidence or justification for privatising children's services in order to improve it. There are real fears it could adversely affect the service to Sandwell's children."

"The government is set to make an announcement shortly. If it includes privatising staff we will formally ballot for a strike as soon as possible."

The union is preparing for action and launching a political campaign seeking

to engage MPs, practitioners and others interested in the service.

**SOCIAL WORK** teams in Kirklees, West Yorkshire, have again voted for action over pay, workloads, travel plans, bullying and the use of 25 percent agency staff last week.

In their second indicative ballot, Unison members, voted by 86 percent to hold a formal strike ballot for action.

The need for an official ballot is of the greatest urgency as the dispute started in March and Kirklees Council await the outcome of a recent Ofsted inspection.

**Nick Ruff Kirklees Unison branch chair (pc)**

## LONDON UNDERGROUND

# Two battles on the Tube rooted in demand for safety

**FOUR** IN every five London Underground station staff members feel less safe at work as a result of cuts imposed by bosses on the capital's Tube stations.

That's according to the findings from the TSSA union's safety impact staff survey.

It also reported rising passenger frustration, a spike in abuse towards staff and increased stress at work.

The TSSA is balloting its members for industrial action.

Tube station workers in the RMT union voted for strikes by 85 percent and by 94 percent for action short of strikes last week over the impact of the station cuts programme.

The union has called on members not to work any overtime or rest days from Wednesday.

In a separate dispute over a "wholesale breakdown in industrial relations", drivers in the RMT on the Piccadilly Line voted by 84 percent for strikes.

## Horrific

No action had been called as Socialist Worker went to press. But Mick Cash, RMT general secretary, said, "RMT members see day in and day out the toxic impact of the job cuts programme and they are reporting back that it is horrific."

"With the constant overcrowding on stations and platforms it is only a matter of time before there is a major tragedy if we don't act decisively."

"Our dispute is about taking action to haul back the cuts machine and put safety back at the top of the agenda."

## CINEMA WORKERS

# Scabs are real beasts

by ALISTAIR FARROW

**WORKERS** AT Picturehouse cinemas in Brixton and Hackney in London struck last week in their long-running fight for decent pay.

They timed their strikes to coincide with the release of the new film *Fantastic Beasts* for maximum effect.

Brixton workers struck for five days, from Thursday of last week to Monday. Hackney struck on Friday, Saturday and Monday.

On Monday, bosses shipped in managers to work at Hackney to cover the shifts and undermine the strike.

"People were nervous about the company bringing people in to do our jobs," a Hackney Bectu union rep told Socialist Worker. "But as the dispute has gone on, people's nervousness has melted away."

A worker at the Ritzy in Brixton agreed, "Every time we go out it feels like we're getting more bonded."

That new confidence will be tested by management's latest move.

Strikers have worked hard to build support for the dispute in the local area. The strength of that support was



Picketing in Brixton

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

put to the test on Monday.

Workers appealed to the local trade union movement to build their picket line, getting supporters to help disrupt the film screenings.

Management changed the times of film screenings to avoid the pickets.

But workers got down to the cinema in Hackney early to explain to customers what was going on and tell them not to go in.

Brixton Bectu rep Nia told Socialist Worker, "They could have paid us the London Living Wage already with the amount they've lost so far in the dispute."

It's clear that management will resist strikers' demands.

The strikebreaking is an attempt to stop the union spreading action to different sites.

Go to [bit.ly/2ddgle5](http://bit.ly/2ddgle5) for more information about the Hackney Picturehouse dispute



# STRIKING FOR RAIL SAFETY

by RAYMIE KIERNAN

**THE GRUBBY** relationship at the heart of Britain's worst rail company was exposed again ahead of a 48-hour walkout by Southern train guards on Tuesday.

Bosses at Govia Thameslink Railway, which runs Southern, are withholding backdated holiday pay from the guards—unless they commit in writing not to strike.

“How can the company be allowed to withhold our money like this? It's got to be illegal,” striking guard Mel told Socialist Worker.

The RMT union has put in a legal challenge to this blackmail.

## Victimised

But it is not the first time the firm has victimised the strikers for resisting the extension of driver only operation (DOO), which undermines safety on the railway. It's also the latest example of how the government ignores Govia's bullying and incompetence.

The firm is paid a fixed fee by the Department of Transport (DfT) for mismanaging four previously separate rail franchises. It can do no wrong in the DfT's eyes.

The Tories hired Govia to



STRIKING GUARDS on the picket line at Victoria station

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

go to war with the rail unions and, because it doesn't rely on revenues to make a profit, it has no real incentive to run a decent service.

When Govia breached its contract by cancelling too many trains, the Tories changed the rules to let it cancel even more. This year it

has cancelled 83,000—that's an average 19 trains an hour.

Even though DOO increases the dangers and disadvantages faced by disabled and vulnerable passengers, a breach of equality law, the Tories couldn't care less.

There is a network of rail

bosses at the heart of the plot to drive through DOO. The allegedly “independent” Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) is one vehicle for this.

Eight of its 11 board executives are rail bosses, including Govia CEO Charles Horton. Half its income comes from rail firms with the DfT

providing much of the rest.

It argues that heaping sole safety responsibility onto drivers poses “no increased risk”. RSSB argues the most “cost effective” way to extend DOO is by sacking train guards. This is worth £350 million to rail bosses in the long term.

## Sacking

The person in charge of government oversight, DfT director of passenger services Peter Wilkinson, thinks unions should “get the hell out of my industry”.

Wilkinson also worked for Govia to help it win rail franchises from the government.

Every rail boss is watching the outcome of this dispute.

It's crucial that train drivers—currently balloting to strike—join the walkouts. Action by the drivers' Aslef union can help turn the tables on the bosses.

That's why bosses may try to use anti-union laws again to stop them taking action. If workers want to fight they will have no option but to defy the law—and everyone else must back them.

Send a message of solidarity to 1885wackers@gmail.com. Donate to the strike fund—send cheques made out to “RMT South East Regional Council” to RMT Head Office, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD.

## HOUSING

## ‘Pay to stay’ dropped in blow to Act

THE TORIES' assault on council housing hit a setback this week when housing minister Gavin Barwell announced that planned mandatory “Pay to Stay” rent hikes were being scrapped.

Part of the hated Housing and Planning Act, it would have seen some council tenants pay up to market rents.

They would be charged 15p for every pound their household



Odious Tory Gavin Barwell

earned over a threshold of £31,000 outside London and £40,000 in London.

This was to be mandatory for councils—and, disgracefully, housing associations were looking at charging it too.

Now councils and housing associations will have “local discretion” to opt in to the charge—so tenants need to keep the pressure on them not to.

Campaigning has helped to remove part of this rotten Act but there is still plenty in it to fight against. It includes measures to force councils to sell off “higher value” housing.

Campaigners, trade unionists and tenants need to support the Axe the Housing Act campaign and scupper the whole thing—and knock down the odious Barwell with it.

**Alistair Farrow**

The Axe the Housing Act campaign was set to hold a demonstration against the Housing White Paper outside parliament on 23 November. Go to [axethehousingact.org.uk](http://axethehousingact.org.uk)

## SNP urged to nationalise after one train cuts off Edinburgh

IT IS not often that Nicola Sturgeon looks under strain. But the Scottish National Party (SNP) leader faces increasing pressure over the performance of Scotrail.

A single broken down train in “probably the worst place in the country”, according to Scotrail, blocked all routes into Edinburgh's main station last week.

It triggered another wave of outrage from Scotrail's long-suffering passengers. Its operator Abellio is under fire for

poor service that has seen it fined £483,000 by the Scottish government.

It has infuriated people with its practice of allowing late-running trains to skip stops.

That has put the case for bringing Scotland's rail operator under some form of public control firmly on the agenda.

## Setting

SNP transport minister Humza Yousaf announced talks on setting up a public sector train operator.

The train drivers' union

Aslef called for him to be sacked.

Its affiliation to the Labour Party could have played a part in that.

Yousaf said, “If the Scottish government had to take over the railways tomorrow, we have contingency plans in place to do that.”

Yet the SNP

has no plans for public ownership any time soon.

Unless Scotrail misses performance targets so low it would have to be as woeful as Southern, the next opportunity to break the contract is 2020. That



SNP transport minister Humza Yousaf